

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 081 289

FL 004 632

AUTHOR Bourque, Edward H., Ed.
TITLE The FLES Student: A Study. A Report of the 1967
F.L.E.S. Committee of the American Association of
Teachers of French.
INSTITUTION American Association of Teachers of French.
PUB DATE 68
NOTE 89p.
AVAILABLE FROM Rand McNally & Company, P.O. Box 7600, Chicago, Ill.
60680 (\$4.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Admission Criteria; Curriculum Development;
Educational Interest; Educational Television;
Elementary Schools; *Fles Programs; *Language
Instruction; Language Programs; Modern Language
Curriculum; *Student Attitudes; Student Evaluation;
Student Interests; Student Motivation; *Student
Reaction

ABSTRACT

This volume, one of a continuing series of annual reports which first appeared in 1961, focuses on the effects of early second language training and the reactions of students as they advance through high school language classes and college courses. The report discusses who chooses to enter FLES programs, criteria for admission, student response, student evaluation and tests, surveys for student reactions, success in a program that begins early, and educational television. (RL)

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

ED 081289

THE FLES STUDENT

A STUDY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

A Report of the
1967 F·L·E·S COMMITTEE
of
**THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF TEACHERS OF FRENCH**

Edward H. Bourque, *Editor*

CHILTON BOOKS • EDUCATIONAL DIVISION

Publishers

Philadelphia . . . New York

#2054

FL 004 632

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL BY MICRO
FICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Chilton Company

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERAT-
ING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NA-
TIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE
THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMIS-
SION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER

Copyright © 1968 by Chilton Company

Printed in the United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	v
Introduction	vii
I. Who Enters the Program	1
A Philosophical Position	3
Selective Practices	9
II. Evaluative Practices: The State of the Art	13
Criteria for Admission: A Call for Research	15
Achievement Measures	23
Alternative to Normative Tests	34
III. Feedback as a Source of Input	41
Children's Needs	43
Children's Recommendations	48
IV. Feedback: A Longitudinal View	55
FLES in Retrospect	57
V. Educational Television	73
Scope and Implications	75
Assessments	78
Conclusion	86
The FLES Committee of the AATF—1967	87

PREFACE

In 1960 the National FLES (Foreign Languages in the Elementary School) Committee of the American Association of Teachers of French was established. As a result, every year since 1960 this committee has submitted a report at the Annual Meeting of the Association. The following topics have been discussed in these reports:

- 1961: The Supply, Qualification and Training of Teachers of FLES
- 1962: Language Structures at FLES Level, Including Testing for Mastery of Structures¹
- 1963: The Correlation of a Long Language Sequence Beginning in the Elementary School¹
- 1964: Reading at the FLES Level¹
- 1965: Culture in the FLES Program²
- 1966: FLES and the Objectives of the Contemporary Elementary Schools²

The 1967 committee report, *The FLES Student*, is a study of the effects of early language training and the reactions of students as they advance through high-school classes and, later, college courses. This report should prove of interest and value to teachers, administrators, and those involved in the writing of materials for elementary-school programs of foreign languages. Readers of this report will find the personal comments by students especially helpful as a key to their attitudes, their problems, and the benefits they have derived from a long sequence.

Each year the committee reorganizes after presenting its report at the Annual Meeting of the AATF. It is at this time that the committee selects a subject to research for the coming year. In choosing this year's subject for the report, the committee expressed concern over student involvement in a FLES program. It was with this intention that the Co-Chairmen and the committee devised an outline that would serve as a guide to study the effects of a FLES

¹ Available from National Information Bureau, 972 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

² Available from Chilton Books, 401 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

program, always bearing in mind student response relating to attitude, motivation, and achievement.

The Committee wishes to express sincere appreciation to the administrative officers of the American Association of Teachers of French for their continued interest in this yearly project. The Co-Chairmen wish to thank the executive board of the AATF for providing funds for a meeting in October to organize and edit the reports that are to be found here in the final draft. The Co-Chairmen also wish to acknowledge the services of the Fairfield Board of Education and Fairfield University, Fairfield, Connecticut, for printing the 1967 report.

EDWARD H. BOURQUE
Fairfield Public Schools

INTRODUCTION

Ever since FLES programs began to be part of the total elementary-school experience, much discussion has centered on the "how" and the "what." Numerous volumes have been written on methodology, materials developed for pupil consumption, reports and books written on the psychology of second-language learning. Much research has been compiled relative to attitudes, interests, motivation, aptitude, achievement, and prior language learning. This research, without a doubt, has contributed a great deal to understanding second-language programs that begin at an early age. Psychologists, curriculum planners, linguists, teachers, and programmers have all been involved in determining how a second language should be taught. Foreign language specialists have often stated that beginning a second language at an early age will enable the FLES pupil to learn to understand, speak, and eventually to read and write this new language much better than if he had begun at a later age. The profession has heard repeatedly, "the younger the child, the easier will be the acquisition of a new language because, at this early age, the child is more flexible and more receptive to learning."

Although research has contributed much to the teacher's understanding of the FLES pupil, much remains to be done to measure the effects of second-language learning, and the FLES student's reactions during his exposure to that language. There is a relative paucity of information concerning the child's (later, the student's) assessment of his own experience in terms of materials, approaches being used, continued study, and eventual outcomes of a FLES beginning. Many questions still remain to be investigated by psychological and educational research that will take into account the FLES student at different stages of language study.

The papers presented in this report, then, are focused on student reactions to the FLES experience. The concerns and research findings collected in this total report are, of necessity, not limited to the FLES pupil in the elementary school; they also touch on the FLES student and the effects of second-language learning as he progresses through secondary school into college. The reports contained herein attempt to discuss such broad areas as the following: who enters the

programs, criteria for admission, student response, evaluation and instruments available, surveys for student reactions, success in a program that begins early. Readers of this report will also be interested in the comments made relative to language instruction through television as compared to instruction by a specialist.

It is hoped that the efforts of the FLES Committee to illuminate this year's topic, will stimulate others to explore further the degree of success of FLES in terms of student participations and achievement.

EDWARD H. BOURQUE
Fairfield Public Schools

1/2

I. WHO ENTERS THE PROGRAM

A PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION SELECTIVE PRACTICES

The first essay of this section invokes the American commitment to universal education and to equal opportunity as a basis for introducing students to FLES on a non-selective basis. A brief review of the literature suggests that no reliable criteria are available to date to support a dissenting point of view. On the contrary, students otherwise of limited academic talent have often demonstrated a capacity for foreign-language learning. There is also indication that FLES programs have contributed to, rather than inhibited, general academic growth.

The concluding observation that, in foreign-language study as in other subject-matter areas, differentiation of individual talents necessitates curricular adjustments, provides a theme which will be developed in subsequent essays.

The second essay elaborates the injustice of selecting FLES students on the basis of general academic achievement, or on the basis of strength or weaknesses in particular subject areas. Each child should have opportunity to test his capacities for foreign-language skills as an incentive to continued achievement.

ROGER A. PILLET
The University of Chicago

WHO SHOULD ENTER THE PROGRAM: A PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION

Professionals whose work concerns the teaching of foreign languages in the elementary school, whether they be leaders in the national curriculum movement or teachers in FLES classes, are often taken by their associates in other areas of elementary education to be representatives of a discipline and practitioners of a profession both of which exist outside the usual framework of the American school. Intentionally or not, such educators frequently communicate with and about FLES professionals in terms of "we and you others." It is seldom consciously taken into account that the large majority of persons working in FLES today are products of the American educational system; that almost all of them have been trained in American teacher-training programs; and that all are intimately concerned with and professionally committed to the American school. The truth is that FLES professionals, to the same extent as all other elementary educators, feel a strong sense of identity with the larger universe of the American educational system and the total curriculum of the elementary school as well as with their special field of the teaching of foreign languages. This feeling of identity and concern was reflected in the selection of the topic for the 1966 report of the FLES Committee of the American Association of Teachers of French.¹ This report comprised a systematic statement of the ways in which foreign-language instruction can support and extend the broad objectives of the contemporary elementary school.

Similarly, the FLES professional feels a primary concern for the elementary-school child. Just as the classroom generalist relates to the child through the organization of instruction and the creation of learning experiences appropriate to him, so does the FLES teacher during the language class. Just as the classroom generalist may have special areas of competence, either personal or professional, which enable him to extend this relatedness in ways beneficial to the child, so does the FLES teacher. Some of the special competencies the two display may be similar, but some will differ in kind or degree, as could be expected in looking at any two teachers. A particular area of strength of the FLES teacher may be the perspective he gains concerning the development of the

¹ Roger A. Pillet and others, *FLES and the Objectives of the Contemporary Elementary Schools*, Philadelphia: Chilton Books, Educational Division, 1967.

child through application of his understandings about the nature of language and the way in which it is acquired. In any case, the FLES teacher shares with all others in the school a preoccupation with the elementary child and with his needs and aspirations. Therefore, when we speak in this report of the "FLES student," we are speaking of the "elementary student," and we are taking as a broad background of the discussion the assumption that, though we are dealing here with the student as he may be involved in foreign-language instruction, we possess in common with other professionals in the field of elementary education a range of understandings concerning the student within the larger framework of the total elementary school.

If asked to define some characteristics of the typical FLES student, the good FLES teacher would describe him as being lively, curious about language, eager to respond, interested in the activities of the class, skilled in mimicry and the ability to recall, and expressive of satisfaction with the success he experiences in the learning of a foreign language. To the extent that the teacher has mastered the techniques of the audio-lingual approach to language instruction, he will to the same degree describe his students more or less in terms of these traits. The same teacher will have reached the conclusion, either through his own observations or through examination of the investigations of others, that these traits can often be seen in students concerning whom predictions of success could not have been made on the basis of measures of intelligence or of outstanding achievement in previous learnings. Since certain of the mechanisms through which instruction is organized and certain of the learning activities provided for a FLES class are distinctively characteristic of language classes and may not occur in other areas of the elementary school, the FLES teacher, therefore, has an opportunity to relate to the student in different ways through these mechanisms and activities and thus to contribute to the total understanding of the elementary child.

A review of the literature will reveal that the basic philosophical position of FLES professionals as to which elementary students shall be enrolled in language classes holds that all children in a given grade level should study the foreign language offered. Modifications of this practice of universal enrollment are then proposed, just as they would be in regard to any other area of the elementary curriculum, on the basis of the individual needs of children. This position is generally founded on two principles: a belief in the equality of educational opportunity and a belief that language study ranks among the important common learnings

of mankind. Stanley Levenson, in an article reprinted in *Readings in Foreign Languages for the Elementary School*,² writes: "In keeping with the American tradition of providing equal educational opportunity for all, foreign languages in the elementary school should be offered to all students in the grades involved. There is no valid measuring device for language potential on which to base selection of pupils, and the U. S. Army Language School at Monterey has revealed that there is little correlation between intelligence test scores and language learning." In "Foreign Languages in Elementary Schools—Some Questions and Answers,"³ reprinted in the same volume, it is stated that all children in a given grade should have the opportunity to learn a foreign language. "The elementary-school curriculum is properly considered as a sum of learnings acquired by individual children as they progress through the years at their own speed, in keeping with their individual talents. Language learning, then, should not be restricted to children of superior intelligence." The article proceeds to state that language instruction should be required for children with learning problems only when their desire and ability to learn have been demonstrated, since the resulting feeling of accomplishment gives them greater confidence in their general learning ability, or when they live in a bilingual community. Dunkel and Pillet, in *French in the Elementary School*,⁴ report: "We believed that if foreign languages were a suitable study for the elementary school, they should be available to all children, just as in our school all children take science, mathematics and the rest."

Even in writings specifically concerned with programs for exceptional children, the same basic philosophical position emerges. Starr, Thompson, and Walsh, in *Modern Foreign Languages and the Academically Talented Student*,⁵ suggest that not later than Grade 3 all children should have opportunity to learn to compre-

² Stanley Levenson, "FLES Is a Revolution!", *Reading in Foreign Languages for the Elementary School* (Waltham, Mass.: Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1967), p. 19. Reprinted by permission of the California Teachers Association Journal from "FLES Is a Revolution!", *CTA Journal*, Vol. 59, No. 4, pp. 16-18, October, 1963.

³ *Op. cit.*, Modern Language Association, "Foreign Language in Elementary Schools—Some Questions and Answers," p. 148. Reprinted by permission of the Modern Language Association from "Foreign Languages in Elementary Schools—Some Questions and Answers," Dec. 11-13, 1953, June 11-12, 1954.

⁴ Harold B. Dunkel and Roger A. Pillet, *French in the Elementary School* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 12.

⁵ NEA and the Modern Language Association of America—Foreign Language Program, *Modern Foreign Languages and the Academically Talented Student* (Washington, D. C.: NEA Publication-Sales Section, 1960), p. 13.

hend and speak a second language. They also believe that the problem of developing distinctive patterns of instruction for the academically talented may not be so significantly different in foreign languages as it is for other disciplines. "Early identification is likely to be most discoverable by performance in the program, and continuing experience of the gifted is likely to be characterized by the two distinguishing features of rapidity of advance and depth and quality of perception." Mary Finocchiaro, in *Teaching Children Foreign Languages*,* reiterates the same principles: "If we do not merely pay lip service to the concept of equal educational opportunities for all children, it behooves us not to be selective. All children who have the mental ability to learn any subject in the curriculum will be able to profit from studying a foreign language. (Indeed, some interesting experimentation in this area reveals that even feeble-minded persons are capable of understanding and speaking a second language.)"

The FLES professional is well aware that many of his colleagues in the field of elementary education do not share his fundamental position in regard to the teaching of foreign languages to all children. They cannot disagree with the principle of equal educational opportunity for all, but they are often unwilling to admit that foreign-language learning has a legitimate place in the elementary school and may frequently argue that the "more legitimate" areas of the curriculum will suffer by the inclusion of FLES, whatever the benefits which may accrue to the child in the FLES class. In an article reprinted in *Readings in Foreign Languages for the Elementary School*, Mildred Donoghue summarizes "What Research Tells Us About the Effects of FLES." She reports on three carefully controlled studies in metropolitan New York, in St. Paul, Minnesota, and in Champaign, Illinois. The investigations were from one to three years in duration, and the number of children involved in the experiment ranged from 114 to 4611. From 75 to 100 minutes a week were allotted to foreign-language instruction. The other curriculum areas from which time was deleted for this instruction were arithmetic, language arts, and the social studies. In each study, it was found that the FLES pupils, as compared with carefully equated non-FLES pupils in the control groups,

* Mary Finocchiaro, *Teaching Children Foreign Languages* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 6.

¹ Ibid.

² Op. cit., Mildred R. Donoghue, "What Research Tells Us About the Effects of FLES," pp. 128-129. Reprinted from *Hispania* from "What Research Tells Us About the Effects of FLES," *Hispania*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 3, pp. 555-558, September, 1965.

showed no significant loss in achievement in other subject areas of the elementary curriculum. Several groups of pupils, from two of the studies, showed a measurably greater gain either in mean achievement or in achievement in reading vocabulary and reading comprehension. Similar conclusions have been reported, both formally and informally, from other school districts; and only if definitive studies were made which led to a contrary conclusion should the FLES teacher be concerned that language instruction would be detrimental to the achievement of the child in other areas of the curriculum.

Elizabeth Thompson and Arthur Hamalainen, in their booklet, *Foreign Language Teaching in Elementary Schools*,³ argued that foreign-language instruction takes a legitimate place in the elementary curriculum only when it is of immediate need in the child's environment. They state that all children in the grade levels involved should be taught the language only when they reside in a bilingual community. They hypothesize a condition in which certain children might be offered a foreign language during recreation periods in the school day or after school—when they are likely to encounter foreign visitors or maids in their homes or when they are planning a trip abroad—but recommend that, therefore, the children should be taught only those phrases which they are likely to find immediately useful. Much of the language of the Thompson and Hamalainen report recalls the period of the thirties and early forties when the notion of organizing the curriculum around elements of social utility was current. In that period it was suggested that the content of the arithmetic program should be confined to those operations which the child would need and use at once or in the immediate future, such as making change of paying the gas bill. Highly practical items such as the want ad section of the daily paper were recommended as reading materials. This notion represented a culturally limited and limiting view of what is useful and was anti-intellectual in nature, since it failed to take into account much that we know today about the cognitive growth of the child. It could not now serve as a fundamental guide-line in any areas of the curriculum, nor could a further suggestion of the booklet: that children should be exposed to a multiplicity of foreign languages from all parts of the world as a part of their social-studies work. This practice would be rejected by both the social-studies specialist and the FLES teacher as not being instructive in

³ Elizabeth Thompson and Arthur Hamalainen, *Foreign Language Teaching in Elementary Schools* (Washington, D. C.: NEA—Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1958), pp. 38-40.

either field. A more contemporarily useful view of the importance of FLES in today's curriculum appears in the 1966 report of this committee, already cited above.

A more exhaustive examination of the literature would probably only corroborate what has emerged in this brief review: that the most general point of agreement among FLES professionals concerning the question about who shall enroll in FLES classes is that all children should have at least an initial opportunity to learn to understand and speak a new language. This belief is based upon the principle of equality of educational opportunity—a principle we share with all our colleagues in elementary education—and upon the conviction that foreign-language study has a legitimate and important place in the elementary curriculum. The fact that we must, in spite of these fundamental principles, proceed to consider certain questions in regard to the possible establishment of selective practices and admission criteria should not appear surprising. We recognize that the necessity for these may exist, because we also share with our colleagues in the American school the belief that the curriculum exists for the child and that his individual differences and needs must be respected.

MARJORIE L. PEI
Washington University

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Donoghue, Mildred R., "What Research Tells Us About the Effects of FLES," *Readings in Foreign Languages for the Elementary School*. Waltham, Massachusetts: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1967.
- Dunkel, Harry B. and Pillet, Roger A., *French in the Elementary School*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1962.
- Finocchiaro, Mary, *Teaching Children Foreign Languages*. New York, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964.
- Levenson, Stanley, "FLES Is a Revolution!", *Readings in Foreign Language for the Elementary School*. Waltham, Massachusetts: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1967.
- Modern Language Association, "Foreign Language in Elementary Schools—Some Questions and Answers," *Readings in Foreign Languages for the Elementary School*. Waltham, Massachusetts: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1967.
- NEA and the Modern Language Association—Foreign Language Program, *Modern Foreign Languages and the Academically Talented Student*, Washington, D. C.: NEA Publication-Sales Section, 1960.
- Pillet, Roger and others, *FLES and the Objectives of the Contemporary Elementary Schools*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Chilton Books, Educational Division, 1967.
- Thompson, Elizabeth and Hamalainen, Arthur, *Foreign Language Teaching in Elementary Schools*. Washington, D. C.: NEA—Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1958.

SELECTIVE PRACTICES

a. Total Population

The foreign-language profession is generally supportive of the democratic ideal that all Americans are entitled to a complete public-school education. It professes a deep commitment to foreign-language instruction as contributing significantly to the total process of education.

There seems to be an evident inconsistency between the position stated above and the discriminatory barriers often placed in the way of language learning. It is all the more deplorable that the selective criteria currently invoked as a basis for pre-selection are but tenuously supported by documentation.

If the Elementary School Curriculum is accepted today as an ordered process wherein the individual child progresses at his own speed and according to his personal strengths and weaknesses, then the FLES program, as an integral part of the Elementary School Curriculum must be made available to all, regardless of I.Q., academic achievement, language aptitude, high reading scores, et cetera. We cannot, in good conscience, employ such selective procedures as would limit or deny a child the right to the opportunity of studying in any subject matter field.

b. Selective Practices

First on the list of the selective criteria being used to screen students for admission into FLES classes is selection, by means of I.Q. scores, of the "academically gifted." The use of this criterion is often justified on the basis that there are too few trained FLES teachers available. Notwithstanding, recent studies have shown that although a correlation does exist between I.Q. and aptitude for foreign languages, it is not of particular significance since these same studies have also shown that there is a correlation between high I.Q. and aptitude in *any* subject. What these studies have proved is that, to paraphrase Gertrude Stein, "a good student is a good student."

Perhaps the main objection that most foreign-language teachers have to this criterion for selection based on the "good student" or the academically talented is, ironically, that such students are too few and far between to satisfy the needs of our complex society. This objection was voiced in the Foreword to the report of the

Working Committee on the Foreign Language Program, Grades 3-12 at the Northeast Conference of 1958.¹

"Now it is being realized by the country as a whole that such students are too few to take care of the needs of international business and industry, too few to staff the diplomatic service in our country, and too few just to communicate in a friendly way for the development of mutual understanding and trust at a time when the need is great."

More and more today we are hearing the term "language aptitude" in conjunction with selective practices. Just what is "language aptitude," and is this a valid criterion for admission into a FLES program? William Riley Parker reminds us that even though it is an obvious truth that some students learn something or anything faster or better than other students, and that some intelligent students do, obviously, develop a seeming menal bloc against some subjects, it is not logical to deduce a third "truth"—that foreign language may be elected for study by part of the population but not by another part, because they lack sufficient aptitude. He further states: ²

"Against such an inference the experience, not of parts of a population, but of whole nations, such as the Belgians or the Swiss, would argue convincingly if their experience were known or remembered."

Another criterion for selection advocated by some is high performance scores in reading English.³ Since it is universally accepted today that the ability to read well in the mother tongue has no validity as a predictor of success in a second language, this is completely unreliable as a means of selection of FLES pupils. In fact, the language learner is not exposed to the written word until he has acquired a reasonable proficiency in the first two of the fundamental skills, i.e., listening and speaking. In a recent study of the selective criteria currently in use, Ilo Remer concludes: ⁴

"None of the criteria, . . . singly or in combination, is of sufficient validity to justify its use as a basis for exclusion of potential lan-

¹ Foreword to the Northeast Conference of the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1958. Report of the Working Committee on the "Foreign Language Program, Grades 3-12."

² William Riley Parker, *The National Interest and Foreign Languages* (Washington, 1962), p. 109.

³ Ruth R. Cornfield, *Foreign Language Instruction, Dimensions and Horizons* (New York, 1966), p. 154.

⁴ Ilo Remer, *A Handbook for Guiding Students in Foreign Languages* (Washington, 1963), p. 15.

guage students. Anyone able to use his native language to conduct the ordinary affairs of life can also acquire a reasonable competence in a second language, if given sufficient time and opportunity to do so and if sufficiently motivated. A tryout of a semester or a year in the foreign language to be studied is regarded as the best predictor of success."

In our belief that every child should have the opportunity to study a second language, we hold as our greatest objection to selective criteria the fact that any or all of them tend to deny this opportunity to the slow learner. This is especially disturbing when there is evidence to indicate that language experience has often brought the first feeling of success to the slow learner. This success, working as an impetus, has revitalized interest in other subject areas. As Theodore Andersson so aptly states in *The Teaching of Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools*: *

"Language has therefore not infrequently been the means of salvaging the poorest pupils, who would under the principle of selectivity not have a chance."

c. Elective Practices

As the Elementary School Curriculum is one of enrichment and exploration rather than compartmentalization, the authors suggest that selection or election out of the foreign-language program should be deferred until the Middle School or later secondary levels.

d. Voluntary; Extra Curricular

Many schools and school-associated groups have established voluntary and/or extra-curricular foreign-language programs. In recent years, these programs have multiplied rapidly due to federal funds available under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

One such program, under ESEA, Title III, is the "Genesis of a Vibrant Culture Program" currently in operation in the New Orleans Public Schools. Through this program, Elementary School pupils are afforded reinforcing and enriching experiences in French through the use of the audio-visual (Guberina-Rivenc) method using the "Bonjour Line" materials. This program is supportive in nature to the "Parlons Français" ETV Program which is part of

* Theodore Andersson, *The Teaching of Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools* (Boston, 1953), p. 34.

the regular school curriculum for children in grades 3 through 6 in all elementary schools of the New Orleans metropolitan area.

Many areas have initiated similar voluntary programs that are conducted before or after regular school hours. In general, these programs are taught by native speakers who may or may not have had formal training as FLES teachers.

While the authors do not feel that such programs are as desirable or as effective as a FLES program which is an integral part of the elementary school curriculum and taught by a trained FLES specialist, such programs are nevertheless, an effective way of providing the child with the motivation and incentive for future foreign-language study.

HOMER DYESS AND ROBERT KASTNER
New Orleans Public Schools

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andersson, Theodore. *The Teaching of Foreign Languages in the Elementary School*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1953.
- Childers, J. Wesley. *Foreign Language Teaching*. New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1964.
- Cornfield, Ruth R. *Foreign Language Instruction—Dimensions and Horizons*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966.
- Eriksson, Marguerite, Forest, Ilse, and Mulhauser, Ruth. *Foreign Languages in the Elementary School*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.
- Finocchiaro, Mary. *Teaching Children Foreign Languages*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964.
- Huebener, Theodore. *How to Teach Foreign Languages Effectively* (Revised edition). New York: New York University Press, 1965.
- Keesee, Elizabeth. *Modern Foreign Languages in the Elementary School*. Washington: U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1962.
- Parker, William Riley. *The National Interest and Foreign Languages* (Third edition). Department of State Publication 7324. Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962.
- Pimsleur, Paul; Mosbert, Ludwig, and Morrison, Andrew L. "Student Factors in Foreign Language Learning." *Modern Language Journal*, 46:160-70, April, 1962.
- Remer, Ilo. *A Handbook for Guiding Students in Modern Foreign Languages*. Washington: U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1963.
- . *Modern Foreign Languages and the Academically Talented Student*. Report of a Conference sponsored jointly by the National Education Association Project on the Academically Talented Student and the Modern Language Association of America. Wilmarth H. Starr, et al., ed. Washington: National Education Association, 1960.
- . *FLES Packet*. (A Compilation of Materials on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Elementary Schools.) New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1961.

II. EVALUATIVE PRACTICES: THE STATE OF THE ART

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION: A CALL FOR RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES ALTERNATIVE TO NORMATIVE TESTS

Appropriate evaluation instruments relevant to admission, practices measuring pupil achievement, curriculum design and validating programs are considered an essential need in the second group of essays.

After reviewing the limitation of the "trial period" and other general criteria as substitutes for more reliable prognostic measures, the author of the first essay analyzes the available tests designed specifically to diagnose language aptitude through measurement of component sub-skills.

A survey of available instruments for measuring foreign-language achievement leads to the conclusions, in the second essay, that few are appropriate to the younger FLES students, that most are difficult to administer in the grades, that each fails in some measure to account for differences in the organization of respective programs as reflecting local resources and particular student aptitudes.

Assuming that, for an interim period, the burden of evaluating must fall on the teacher, the third essay suggests an inventory of objectives as prerequisite to developing local tests. The applicability of sample items to appropriate levels of instruction is illustrated.

ROGER A. PILLET
The University of Chicago

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION: A CALL FOR RESEARCH

How effective are the various widely used predictors of success in foreign-language learning? One can answer in a few words—not effective enough. Despite repeated attempts to preselect students through pretesting or teaching ratings, correlations between predictions and criterion scores (whether tests or foreign-language grades) have been relatively low or, if high in one study, they have resisted replication in following studies.

Furthermore, one must point out at the outset that actual research studies regarding the effectiveness of predictions have almost completely ignored elementary-school programs. The majority of the attempts at prediction have involved adults (including college students). A sizeable number have concerned senior high school students, but only a handful the junior high; the elementary school even fewer.

In the discussion that follows, a few of the studies relating to predictions are cited. In this paper it would be impossible to treat exhaustively the extensive literature on the subject.

A Trial Period

Probably the most widely accepted method of selecting students for foreign-language classes is that which allows all students to begin foreign-language learning but assumes that many will be screened out as the weeks, months, and years pass.¹ Giving the student an opportunity to succeed or fail is backed by Dunkel and Pillet, who say: "A sample of actual work is the best predictor. Few students in later years depart from the prediction possible at the end of the first."²

Problems that develop with attempts to use this selection technique are the following:

1. Fellow teachers complain that a sizeable number of the students need remedial help in reading, arithmetic, or other "regular" subjects more than they need exposure to a foreign language.
2. Elementary-school administrators express dismay at providing special programs for foreign-language non-achievers who never-

¹ Ilo Remer, *Handbook for Guiding Students in Modern Language* (Washington, D. C., 1963), p. 16.

² Harold B. Dunkel and Roger A. Pillet, *French in the Elementary School* (Chicago, 1962), p. 70.

theless are not candidates for remedial instruction in other school subjects.

3. Parents object when offspring are eliminated from FLES programs because of non-achievement.

4. Foreign-language teachers are charged with being unwilling to deal with individual differences that confront all other teachers.

Nevertheless the trial period of foreign-language study has the advantage that it gives all students the opportunity without prejudice to try learning a foreign language. One assumes that each will be successful rather than that some cannot succeed.

I.Q.

Among school systems that wish to make some preselection, the I.Q. has been a popular screening device.

Correlations between I.Q. and foreign-language grades have typically been positive but relatively low in reported research. Pimsleur, for example, reports a correlation (r) of .40 in a study involving 100 secondary-school students.³ An exceptionally high correlation was reported recently by Kangas, who found a correlation of .7869 (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) and of .6929 (Lorge-Thorndike), between I.Q. test results and foreign language grades for 7th- and 8th-grade students of French, German, and Spanish.⁴

Dunkel and Pillet, on the other hand, found quite low ($r = .28$ and .32) correlations for students in their elementary-school program.⁵

Other results reported in the literature are equally conflicting, showing an apparently declining relationship between I.Q. and foreign-language achievement as grammar-translation gives way to increasingly newer approaches to teaching and learning. Carroll concluded that "facility in learning to speak and understand a foreign language is a fairly specialized talent (or group of talents) relatively independent of those traits ordinarily included under 'intelligence.'"⁶

³ Paul Pimsleur, Donald M. Sundland and Ruth D. McIntyre, *Under-Achievement in Foreign Language Learning*, Ohio State University Research Foundation, Project Number 1390, April, 1963.

⁴ Ronald D. Kangas, "Factors Relating to Success in 7th Grade Foreign Language Study," *The Modern Language Journal*, XLIX (February, 1965), pp. 97-98.

⁵ Dunkel and Pillet, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁶ John B. Carroll, *Research on Teaching Foreign Languages*, Publications of the Language Laboratory Series Preprints and Reprints: Volume III B (Ann Arbor, 1961), p. 43.

Auditory Discrimination

The student's ability to hear has long been assumed to play an important part in his success or lack of it in learning a foreign language. Recent studies have verified the importance of auditory ability. Pimsleur reported that students who preferred to learn by ear were more likely to succeed in language study than those who preferred to learn through the eye.⁷

Tests of listening have not been impressive when used as predictors. The Seashore Music Test alone correlated only at $r = .37$ for Dunkel and Pillet.⁸ Experimentally, various subtests (Tonal Memory, Pitch, Timbre) have contributed small, important amounts to regression equations but, singly, produced only low positive correlations with foreign-language grades.

Cloos found that the Brown-Carlsen Comprehension Test correlated at .50 with total scores on the German MLA Cooperative Test Form LA.⁹ Obviously this test alone is unlikely to adequately predict success.

Phonetic discrimination ability—the ability to distinguish sounds—is, according to Carroll, not subject to reliable measurement.¹⁰ He believes that auditory ability involves more than a simple ability to hear well and has isolated a factor he calls phonetic coding, “the ability to ‘code’ auditory phonetic material in such a way that this material can be recognized, identified, and remembered over something longer than a few seconds.”¹¹ This is the basis of the Phonetic Script subtest of the Modern Language Aptitude Test. The new Pimsleur *Language Aptitude Battery* also tests auditory ability.¹² There is evidence that this auditory factor contributes not only to ultimate success in listening and speaking but to achievement in reading and writing as well.

Verbal Knowledge

A sizeable number of secondary programs base selection of students for language study on tested verbal ability scores. However, attempts to correlate success in foreign-language learning with verbal ability have been disappointing. While verbal ability is ac-

⁷ Pimsleur, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–42.

⁸ Dunkel and Pillet, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁹ Robert I. Cloos, *A Comparative Study of Fourteen Predictors of Success in the Audio-Lingual Approach to First Year German at the High School Level*, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1964, Unpublished Ed.D. Dissertation.

¹⁰ John B. Carroll, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹² Paul Pimsleur, *Language Aptitude Battery* (New York, 1967).

cepted as a factor in foreign-language learning by several authorities, conventional tests such as the Differential Aptitude Test (Verbal subsection) show only low positive correlation with foreign-language achievement, apparently because of the many other factors that are more important in beginning years.

Numerical Ability

A number of schools have been alerted to the fact that some studies have shown marked relationship between tested Numerical Ability and foreign-language success. This correlation, however, is not of sufficient strength to warrant placement of students based on mathematics scores. For example, Arendt found correlations of .346 and .533 between German and French foreign-language grades and the Numerical Ability subsection of the Differential Aptitude Test.¹³ This study, involving 80 German and 95 French senior high-school students, shows an interesting relationship but really only confirms past studies in indicating the inadequacy of using the Numerical Ability to screen foreign-language students.

Grade Point Average

Because it reflects student performance in the total school setting, grade point average remains a rather reliable predictor of success (i.e., language grades) in foreign-language learning. Pimsleur, for example, reports a .62 correlation between GPA (in academic subjects) and foreign-language grades.¹⁴ The Wittich study, involving 8th-graders, produced $r = .7305$.¹⁵ In fact, there is little evidence that any prediction device will better the power of GPA to predict foreign-language grades, except perhaps the new Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery, which includes GPA, and a motivation scale along with testing sections for developing a total score.¹⁶

Of course, the basic problem with using grades to predict foreign-language grades is that many elementary schools, perhaps most, do not award grades that could be used for prediction.

Presumably, however, where grades are not usually given, a rating scale similar to grading could be developed for completion by the pupil's teacher(s) and used for selection just prior to the beginning of the FLES program.

¹³ Jermaine D. Arendt, *Predicting Success in Foreign Language Study*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 1967. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation.

¹⁴ Paul Pimsleur, "Testing Foreign Language Learning," *Trends in Language Teaching* (Albert Valdman, ed.), New York, 1966, p. 175.

¹⁵ Barbara von Wittich, "Prediction of Success in Foreign Language Study," *Modern Language Journal*, XLVI (May, 1962), pp. 208-212.

¹⁶ Paul Pimsleur, *Language Aptitude Battery*, *op. cit.*

A dissenting voice regarding using past school achievement to predict attainment in foreign language is raised by Dunkel and Pillet.¹⁷ They, furthermore, did not find teacher screening particularly effective.

Foreign-Language Aptitude Tests

Over the years a number of foreign-language aptitude tests have been developed. Only in recent years have tests indicated real promise for excelling measures readily available to school counselors and teachers as a regular part of student permanent records. The *Modern Language Aptitude Test* mentioned earlier is based on Carroll's isolation of a number of language-learning abilities:

1. Phonetic coding (defined earlier).
2. Ability to use grammar—the ability to use the forms of language and their arrangements in natural utterances. This implies that the individual is sensitive to the functions of words in a variety of contexts.
3. Rote memorization ability—the capacity to learn a number of associations in a relatively short time.
4. Ability to infer linguistic forms, rules, and patterns from new linguistic content with a minimum of supervision or guidance.¹⁸

Gardner and Lambert subsequently verified these groupings and agreed with Carroll that verbal reasoning and intelligence were not important in determining foreign-language aptitude.¹⁹

Arendt found that, while Grade Point Average was the best predictor of foreign-language grades, the *MLAT*, or selected subtests of the *MLAT*, was more effective in predicting achievement in German and French as measured by the listening.

Speaking, Reading, and Writing subtests of the *MLA Cooperative Foreign-Language Tests* and for *MLA Coop Total Score*²⁰

Cloos reported similar results for Total Score on the *MLA Coop*.²¹ Both studies concerned senior high students.

As this report goes to press, a new aptitude test, the *EMLAT*,

¹⁷ Dunkel and Pillet, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

¹⁸ John B. Carroll, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹⁹ R. C. Gardner and W. E. Lambert, "Language Aptitude, Intelligence and Second-Language Achievement," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, LVI (August, 1965), pp. 191-199.

²⁰ Jermaine D. Arendt, *op. cit.*

²¹ Robert I. Cloos, *op. cit.*

for grades 3-6 has been announced. Publicity for the new test indicates that it has four game-like parts that measure special language-learning abilities:²²

Hidden Words: measures ability to associate sounds and symbols

Matching Words: measures sensitivity to grammatical structure

Finding Rhymes: measures ability to hear speech sounds

Number Learning: measures auditory alertness and ability to remember.

The publisher says the test will do the following:

1. assess the readiness of pupils to learn a foreign language
2. identify pupils with a special talent for language
3. place pupils in fast and slow groups for language learning
4. diagnose language-learning difficulties.

Obviously, only extensive evaluation by school systems will finally determine whether this new test can be helpful in FLES programs.

Pimsleur, as was mentioned above, in developing his *Language Aptitude Battery*, built in two sections, grade-point average and a motivational scale, which are supposed to tap important elements not ordinarily measured in aptitude tests. In other respects, the test bears considerable similarity to the Carroll, Sapon test with the advantage that it can be given in a normal class period instead of requiring nearly two periods as does the MLAT. Pimsleur reports a considerably better correlation (R) of .72 with foreign-language teacher grades. Finally, the Pimsleur test has been standardized for use as low as 7th grade, while the MLAT is not generally considered usable below grade 9.

What Purpose Aptitude Tests?

Whether or not students *should* be screened prior to the language study for purposes of identifying those with aptitude is a question which will be settled at the local level. However, whether students *can* indeed be preselected for purposes of grouping is a question which will have to be answered through research, careful studies involving pretesting and posttesting plus teachers' ratings. For the present, the trial period is far and away the best device for

²² EMLAT (New York, 1967). As advertised in *Foreign Language Annals*, I (October, 1967).

determining which students at a given level have the apparent aptitude and desire for further language learning.

For elementary schools determined to adapt some screening device prior to the beginning of language learning, it would appear that a form of grade-point average is presently the most reliable criterion for selection, at least when achievement is measured by foreign-language grade. For elementary schools that do not give grades, that is "A," "B," "C," etc., it may be necessary to establish the equivalent of a grading system for use just prior to the fourth grade or at whatever level foreign-language learning begins. In any case, it would be well to validate such a selection system carefully and retest it regularly to determine how it is functioning. Perhaps a worthwhile validation procedure would combine the trial period and the use of achievement grades. In this case the predictions would be made regarding who would and who would not succeed, but all would be allowed to participate. At the end of a given period, prediction could be matched with actual achievement to determine whether indeed correlations were high enough to justify instituting grouping based on prior school achievement.

A similar procedure could be used in attempts at the local level to validate *EMLAT* for grades 3-6 and *Language Aptitude Battery*.

Actually, a much more valid use of predictors for the present is in pretesting groups of students for research purposes, for example, in studying comparative methodologies, comparing efficiency of various schedules of reinforcement, or attempting to determine appropriate time allotments for maximum foreign-language learning.

Finally, tests that serve a diagnostic purpose may pinpoint potential learning difficulties of the FLES pupil. New forms of such pretests as Pimsleur's and Carroll's could serve as a starting point for providing compensatory training which might make it possible for a much larger percentage of pupils to succeed in FLES.

In Summary

1. Since it will be many years before most school districts have either the human or financial resources to provide foreign language for all youngsters, attempts should be made to develop effective predictors of achievement in FLES programs.
2. Aptitude tests provide a way to compare groups of pupils before language learning begins. Thus studies of achievement can be more meaningful than in the past.
3. The profession should furthermore concern itself with developing diagnostic tests that will predict those pupil learning diffi-

- culties which may be taken care of through special remedial instruction.
4. The differences of measuring achievement by test and by teacher grade must be understood. Some predictors may correlate highly with foreign-language grades but not as well with standardized test scores.
 5. Acceptable (that is reliable and valid) standardized criterion tests for FLES must be devised if prediction is to reach optimum levels.

JERMAINE ARENDT
Minneapolis Public Schools

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blickenstaff, Channing B. "Musical Talents and Foreign Language Learning Ability," *The Modern Language Journal*, 47:359-63, December, 1963.
- Carroll, John B. and Sapon, Stanley M. *Modern Language Aptitude Test*. New York: Psychological Corporation, 1959.
- Carroll, John B. *Research on Teaching Foreign Languages*, Publications of the Language Laboratory, Series of Preprints and Reprints, Volume III B. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1961.
- Cloos, Robert J. *A Comparative Study of Fourteen Predictors of Success in the Audio-Lingual Approach to First Year German at the High School Level*. Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Unpublished EdD Dissertation, 1964.
- Dunkel, Harold B. and Pillet, Roger A. *French in the Elementary School*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.
- Gardner, R. C. and Lambert, W. E. "Language Aptitude, Intelligence and Second Language Achievement," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 54:191-99, August, 1965.
- Kangas, Ronald D. "Factors Relating to Success in 7th Grade Foreign Language Study," *The Modern Language Journal*, 49:97-98, February, 1965.
- Kaulfers, Walter Vincent. "Present Status of Prognosis in Foreign Language," *School Review*, 49:585-96, October, 1931.
- Pimsleur, Paul. *The Language Aptitude Battery*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967.
- Pimsleur, Paul, Sundland, Donald M., and McIntyre, Ruth D. *Under-Achievement in Foreign Language Learning*, Final Report. Columbus: The Ohio State University Research Foundation; RF Project 1380, under contract with the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education; Washington, D. C., 1963.
- Remer, Ilo. *A Handbook for Guiding Students in Modern Foreign Languages*, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education Bulletin 1963, No. 26, OE-27018. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1963, p. 105.
- Von Wittich, Barbara. "Prediction of Success in Foreign Language Study," *Modern Language Journal*, 46:206-12, May, 1962.

ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES

The need for national norms, a set of standards, some basis for an objective evaluation of the achievement of FLES students, is generally noted in any assessment of the present state of foreign-language instruction in the elementary schools. Though the desirability of suitable testing devices seems universally accepted, the reasons expressed vary somewhat. Many feel that a foreign-language section added to a battery of achievement tests will reinforce foreign language as a necessary and basic subject area in the elementary school. Emma Birkmaier has expressed the view of many educators: "Language learning should be evaluated at all levels, including elementary school, in the same manner as all subjects in the curriculum, thus stressing the position of the modern-language program as an integral part of general education."¹

A test with national norms automatically sets a standard and, in some cases, proposes a goal. Such a definition of expected outcomes, if reasonable and accurate, would tend to upgrade weak programs and to support strong ones. Anne Slack has said, "We won't have an *honest* 'national' FLES program until some way is devised to measure student achievement in a particular system and to compare it to the national norm. Only by this kind of shock treatment shall we eventually do away with the 'laundry-list' programs which have managed to survive much too long and which have done us so much harm."

Finally, such tests are a proof of the pudding. A good FLES program requires a significant slice of a school-district's budget. With so many justifiable demands made upon its resources, those charged with the allocation and dispensation of school funds need some assurance of value received. George Scherer summed up the situation, "No matter how well the FLES program seems to be going, the day will come when someone with authority will want to know how much of the language the children have learned at each FLES level."² Those controlling the purse strings are not the only ones within the school framework interested in demanding an accounting of FLES outcomes. The other expenditure required of a sound FLES program, time from the crowded school day, must also be justified. Has the student gained in knowledge and skills

¹ Emma Birkmaier, "Evaluating the Foreign Language Program." *North Central Association Quarterly*, 1966, vol. 40, p. 265.

² George Scherer, "The Sine Qua Nons in FLES," *The German Quarterly*, 1964, vol. 37.

that which can be reasonably expected for the time expended? A well-constructed district test could provide a satisfactory justification of both of these expenditures for foreign-language teachers and administrators, but a standardized test with national norms is far more likely to convince laymen and those teachers and administrators outside of the FL that the time and money invested are resulting in proper dividend.

At this point it must be added that there are a few who feel that the extensive use of standardized achievement tests will contaminate the pure "learning for its own sake" atmosphere of FLES. They fear that the battle cry will change from "Learn the language!" to "Pass the test!" Anne Slack feels that the two goals are not mutually exclusive. "If the test is a good, comprehensive, honest test (particularly at the terminal FLES level), I'll say: 'Tant mieux! Let them teach for the test.'" Donald Walsh seconds the motion, "We believe firmly that testing is a legitimate and necessary extension of teaching and that the test maker's goal must be to construct a test in such a way that students-and-teachers who are cramming for the test will be engaged in effective learning."³

The uses to which the results of such national standardized tests might be put have been well summarized in the *MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Tests Handbook*:⁴

Ways in which test scores for individuals can be used include the following:

1. Assessing the competence of a student in a foreign language in relation to that of specified reference groups.
2. Identifying a student whose competence in a foreign language is exceptionally high or low.
3. Comparing a student's competence in a foreign language with his performance in the foreign-language class.
4. Giving parents a realistic, meaningful estimate of a student's developed competence in a foreign language.
5. Helping a student and his parents to consider the student's present competence in a foreign language in relation to academic and vocational plans.
6. Suggesting a level of foreign-language instruction which is appropriate for an individual student.

³ Donald D. Walsh, "The Foreign Language Program in 1963," *Hispania*, 1963, vol. 47, p. 376.

⁴ *MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Tests Handbook*, Princeton, N. J.: Educational Testing Service, 1965, p. 6.

7. Grouping students of similar levels of competence in a foreign language for some instructional purposes.

Ways in which test scores for groups of students, classes, or larger school groups can be used include the following:

1. Appraising average levels of competence in foreign languages for evaluating instructional programs. Alternate forms of the tests can be used before and after instruction to evaluate outcomes.
2. Appraising average levels and ranges of competence for planning foreign-language instruction.
3. Conducting educational research where independent measure of foreign-language competence for a group or groups are necessary experimental "controls."

Information obtained from students' responses to separate items or sets of items is useful primarily for curriculum evaluation and planning, and for instruction.

Ways in which item information can be used for curriculum evaluation include the following:

1. Obtaining an indication of the extent to which specific goals of the foreign language program are being achieved.
2. Identifying areas in which the local student group is exceptionally high or low in relation to local goals for foreign language learning.

Ways in which item information may be used for instruction include the following:

1. Comparing the performance of a class group in specific areas of foreign-language competence or of all students locally.
2. Identifying idioms and structures in a foreign language that are troublesome for a class or for individual students.
3. Discovering the kinds of errors that foreign-language students make.
4. Grouping foreign-language students for special instruction.

Unfortunately, national achievement tests available for use with younger FLES students are quite limited in number and applicability. However, several batteries of tests currently in use should be examined by foreign-language teachers as a matter of general information. Those teaching older elementary students may feel that normative tests may be appropriate in whole or in part, to the achievement level of their students. Teachers of younger children may simply wish to use the tests as a model for structuring items appropriate to the level of their course.

"The MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Tests" published in 1963 for French, Spanish, German, Italian, and Russian have two forms at less advanced (L) and more advanced (M) levels. The tests have separate sections for each of the four skills.⁵ The "L"-level test is designed for use with students who have had one to two complete years of high-school foreign-language instruction. It has been proposed for use with junior high-school students who have covered equivalent material. The content and the organization of the material in the batteries would not lend itself, generally, to use with students younger than those of the junior high. Even with such groups, the interpretation of results might require some adjustment since the norms were based on a sampling of high-school and college classes. There are no norms in the battery specifically for a younger group. This group of tests was designed to provide a measure of the abilities developed in audio-lingual courses in addition to testing the skills of reading and writing. Separate tables are provided for traditional and audio-lingual norms for the four skills.

These tests, on the whole, have had very favorable reviews. However, John Carroll says of them, "Although they have many valuable features, experience has revealed two disadvantages. First, the tests are not adequate as measures of the student's command of the grammar of the foreign language, since rather high scores on many of the tests can be attained through sheer vocabulary knowledge. Second, the tests do not yield scores on a single scale of language competence in a given skill."⁶ Whether these weaknesses would be significant in junior-high testing would depend, of course, on the emphasis and objectives of the course and the proposed uses of the test results. These batteries are widely used, and general scores can be helpful in placement of junior-high students in the proper high-school foreign-language section.

The Pimsleur Proficiency Tests for French, Spanish, and German, published in the spring of 1967, have two forms that test listening and reading comprehension (may be machine scored) and

⁵ In an attempt to evaluate, identify, and compare language aptitude and performance in students of Holland, Belgium, and England, Elizabeth Halsall ("A Comparative Study of Attainments in French," *International Review of Education*, 1963-64, vol. 9, pp. 41-59) reports the addition of the skill of translation to a battery of tests of the four skills.

⁶ John B. Carroll, "Research in Foreign Language Teaching: The Last Five Years," *Language Teaching: Broader Contexts*, ed. by Robert G. Mead, Jr., A Report of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. New York: MLA Materials Center, 1966, p. 34.

speaking and writing proficiency. The two forms, A and C, were designed as first- and second-level tests. The test manual suggests that the batteries may be used with junior and senior high-school students who have completed two-thirds of either "level." The tests were so organized as to reflect the methods and content of the leading textbooks used in junior and senior high schools.⁷ It is worth noting that junior high as well as senior high-school groups were used in the pretesting development of norms. Though this battery is too recent to quote evaluation by practitioners and testing experts, a comparison, by a potential user, of just two aspects of the Pimsleur and MLA tests, the reading comprehension and writing proficiency, would reveal quite different approaches and techniques for testing that which has been labeled as the same skill. The Pimsleur "Manual" emphasizes, that "standardized tests can measure only a representative sample of those aspects of learning commonly accepted as being important and measurable" and that the basic criterion for selecting the appropriate achievement battery must be a matching of its content and objectives with those of the local program.⁸

Though it has been employed in France primarily as a placement test for beginning French students, the Test C.G.M. 62 has also been used as a test of achievement. The C.G.M. 62 is unique in several ways. Instead of a section on each of the four skills, the tests number six: oral comprehension, oral expression, dictation, aural discrimination, written comprehension, and written expression. The manual emphasizes the fact that each section tests only one skill. Only selected items within the test are counted. The manual explains, "This is done because, through experience at Saint-Cloud, it was found that the mastery of certain lexical and structural items is indicative of a strong foundation of language acquisition and is related to a more general facility in French."⁹

This is as much a diagnostic as an achievement test. The preparation of a graphically presented profile is suggested for each student. In many ways the manual underlines the importance of the observation of *individual* response—another unique feature. "Il est nécessaire, toutefois, de ne pas limiter son jugement à l'appréciation quantitative des résultats. Tout au long de l'examen, l'expérimentateur devra noter tout ce qu'il peut sur l'attitude, les réactions

⁷ Paul Pimsleur, *Pimsleur Proficiency Tests Manual*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1967, p. 6.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁹ Chilton/CREDEF, *Test C.G.M. 62, Teacher's Manual in English*, Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1967; quoted.

du candidat, et ne pas se limiter aux "+" et aux "-" à accoler à chaque réponse."¹⁰

There are several other tests (listed in the bibliography) which might be useful to teachers, particularly those involved at the junior high level. Descriptions of some may be found in the Fifth and Sixth *Mental Measurements Yearbook* by Oscar K. Buros.¹¹ All teachers should be familiar with this series of reference books in which tests are classified as to type and subject matter. There are, for most of the tests listed, reviews by experts in the field as well as references to pertinent articles in periodicals. Buros' *Tests in Print* is a source list.

Considerably more usable with the younger FLES student than the three batteries just mentioned, is the California Common Concepts Test available for one level in German, French, Spanish, and English, forms 1 and 2. The test consists of 80 pictures, four to a set. The student selects one of the four pictures in response to a spoken sentence delivered by tape or teacher. Only 23 different pictures are used but they are of varied backgrounds, cultural and geographical, and depict a number of situations. The stimulus sentence focuses attention on separate aspects of each picture. The picture sets are in a re-usable booklet (the same for all of the languages), the student marking only the prepared answer sheet. The manual contains separate norms for elementary, junior high, and senior high school students who have had one to three semesters, and over three semesters of foreign-language instruction. The test manual describes the test rationale: "The test is designed to evaluate the attainment of Level 1 objectives (linguistic understandings) in the language. These objectives are the basic language concepts in both expression and content structure of the language, regardless of the specific curriculum or learning program."¹²

This test involves only passive understandings and does not test speaking, reading, or writing abilities. However, as Carroll points out, "This item type is extremely versatile; it can be used to test passive competence in almost any aspect of a language—phonology, grammar, or vocabulary."¹³ Similar tests have been used satisfactorily by many school systems which have developed evaluation

¹⁰ G. Mialaret and C. Malandain, *Test C.G.M. 62*, Paris: Didier, 1964, p. 8.

¹¹ Oscar K. Buros, *The Sixth Mental Measurements Yearbook*, Highland Park, New Jersey: Gryphon Press, 1965, pp. 633-635.

¹² Bela Banathy et al., *Common Concepts Foreign Language Test: Examiner's Manual*, Monterey, California: California Test Bureau, 1962, p. 7.

¹³ Carroll, *loc. cit.*

instruments for their own programs,¹⁴ as well as by publishers for their own courses of study.

The "Parlons Français" film series provides a three-year testing program designed specifically for the elementary-school student. Though the tests are built around the content of the film series, the test manual for the third level suggests the possibility of their use with other courses of study. "Because *Parlons Français* is based upon *Le Français Fondamental*, the test can be a useful instrument for measuring achievement of French FLES programs in general."¹⁵ The tests for the first two years consist of sets of pictures, one of which the student selects in response to a taped stimulus sentence. The second-year test adds a section on telling time and recognizing numbers. The third-year test, is considerably more sophisticated. In one three-sheet fold-out, it incorporates listening comprehension, spelling, reading comprehension, and sound discrimination. The text of this third-year test is available only on the tape. The norms provided are based on a sampling of elementary students in the United States and Canada.

Almost every one of the aforementioned tests and batteries recommends strongly the development of local norms. The opportunity to compare to a nation-wide sampling has obvious advantages but the necessity for developing local norms should not be understated, particularly for favored social-economic communities. Before he ever crosses the threshold of the foreign-language classroom, the student from such an area has been braced for success by the implantation at home and at school of the prerequisite motivational and verbal factors. Self-contentment and complacency over the quality of instruction (albeit good) which results in the high ranking on standardized achievement tests of such advantaged foreign-language students denotes a somewhat naïve disregard for the suitability and preparation of the raw material involved. The use of local, in addition to national norms, serve to provide a more realistic picture of comparative student achievement.

Carroll raises the question of the usefulness of the scores of such tests for other than comparison of relative achievement. "Percentiles or other derived measures based upon the performance of

¹⁴ The "Denver-Stanford Project," supported in part by a grant from the U. S. Office of Education, produced a picture test for listening comprehension administered via T.V. in Denver. It was determined that picture items were the most successful of all the test material employed.

¹⁵ Anne Slack and Ralph Garry, *Parlons Français III French Listening Comprehension and Reading Test: Manual*, Boston: Heath de Rochemont Corp., 1966.

typical groups in typical courses of instruction give no direct information concerning absolute levels of success. . . . If we are to study the parameters of the language-learning process and related aspects thereof such as retention, forgetting, and relearning, we need measures which report competence in more meaningful terms."¹⁶

He suggests a rating scale similar to the one used by the Foreign Service Institute of the U. S. Department of State. The scale for speaking ranges from 0 to 5, the stages being: no practical knowledge of the language; able to use limited social expressions, numbers and language for travel requirements; able to satisfy routine social and limited office requirements; sufficient control of structure and adequate vocabulary to handle representation requirements and professional discussions in one or more fields; fluency in the foreign language; competence equivalent to English.

The charge has been leveled that foreign-language instruction, in general, caters mainly to the academically talented student. At the high-school level, this may largely be true. Even though most guidelines for FLES programs recommend inclusion of all students in the initial phase of FL instruction, these classes, too, become increasingly selective. It has not been determined whether we have eliminated from both FLES and high-school classes those who clearly would be unsuccessful in learning a foreign language rather than those who would be unsuccessful in the particular foreign-language class in question. On the basis of such tests, more sensitive achievement tests reflecting the total linguistic repertoire of the student at any one point and, in addition, the degree to which that repertoire is functional in terms of the student rather than in terms of selection according to specific skills, would indeed be a salutary step. Recommendations for "low achievers" might consequently include provisions for "small-step increment material," thus assuring the learner successful and "rewarding" experiences in the foreign language.¹⁷ Curricular adjustment might be made to compensate for the observation that exclusively audio-lingual classes are not going to provide a successful experience for all stu-

¹⁶ John B. Carroll, "Research on Teaching Foreign Languages," Ch. 21, in Gage, N. L. (ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963, p. 1092.

¹⁷ John B. Carroll, "Research in Foreign Language Teaching: The Last Five Years," *Language Teaching: Broader Concepts*, ed. by Robert G. Mead, Jr., A Report of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, New York; MLA Materials Center, 1966, pp. 29-30.

dents any more than did the unidirectional reading course of fifty years ago.

Judicious use of instruments which will give us information on specific disabilities as well as strengths in foreign-language learning is a prerequisite to a fundamentally sound program. Permitted the conditions of time and space, a talented and flexible staff may structure curriculum in such a way as to form classes grouped according to these strengths and disabilities rather than according to general FL achievement, with a distinct curriculum for each category of students emphasizing the skills with which the students in that category are best equipped to learn.

There is a second question which arises in regard to the prognostic tests. Is the research into the nature of language learning which was prerequisite to the development of these tests being properly explored and utilized by foreign-language practitioners and supervisors? Though most FL teachers and administrators consider themselves far removed from the rarefied atmosphere of language-learning research, they are the prime movers in securing the benefit of such research for its intended legatee foreign-language student.

The problems of measuring initial motivation and attitude as key factors in FL learning are treated in another section of the Report. We would like to stress that such measurements should be a continuous process. Knowing that a positive mind set toward learning a foreign language is going to determine, to a large extent, not only initial but also continued success in that area, what is being done to prepare the prospective FL student at the elementary-school level for entrance into a FLES or high-school class? With the younger child, pre-indoctrination is not quite so important. He is able to meet his foreign-language teacher for the first time, if not with a positive attitude, at least uncommitted. It is necessary to assure the older elementary-school student the same chance for success. This is an impossible task for a foreign-language teacher, alone and unaided, if she limits her missionary endeavors to the boundaries of her own classroom, since this motivational factor is operative before the student has had any foreign-language instruction. The attitude toward foreign language, be it positive or negative, proliferates in the same way as any of the other air-borne contagions which waft with regularity down the elementary-school corridors. To encourage the positive nature of the reaction (especially among the classroom teachers) is the responsibility of administrators. But attitudes are well-nigh impossible to legislate,

and the FL teacher needs to marshal all of the resources at her command (logic, literature, cooperation, and charm) to implement the directive. Some clear notion of the motivational level of a class is a prerequisite to subsequent decision making.

In the 1963 report of the UNESCO Institute for Education, two of the research projects suggested were the study of the language aptitude of the younger child and the development of measures of attainment for young FLES students.¹⁸ A considerable amount of information may be gleaned from the testing devices now available for the junior high-school student. The research which has preceded the development of achievement and prognostic tests for adolescents will, hopefully, provide direction for the development of more complete testing devices for the middle-grade and eventually for the primary-grade foreign-language pupil.

Pending the development of multipurpose, easily administrated instruments particularly appropriate to the FLES level, the burden of devising adequate local instruments falls squarely on the teacher's shoulder and it is a responsibility he cannot shirk with impunity.

VIRGINIA GRAMER
Hinsdale Public Schools

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Periodicals

1. Andrade, Manuel; Hayman, J. L.; and Johnson, J. T., Jr. "Measurement of Listening Comprehension in Elementary School Spanish Instruction." *Elementary School Journal*, 1963, 64, 84-93.
2. Birkmaier, Emma. "Evaluating the Foreign Language Program." *North Central Association Quarterly*, 1966, 40, 263-71.
3. Blickenstaff, Channing B. "Musical Talents and Foreign Language Learning Ability." *Modern Language Journal*, 1963, 47, 359-363.
4. Buros, Oscar K. *Sixth Mental Measurements Yearbook*. Highland Park, N. J.: Gryphon Press, 1965.
5. Carroll, John B. "Research in Foreign Language Teaching: The Last Five Years," *Language Teaching: Broader Concepts*, A Report of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. New York: MLA Materials Center, 1966, 12-42.
6. Carroll, John B. "Research on Teaching Foreign Languages," in Gage, N. L. (ed.) *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963, 1060-1100.
7. CREDIF, *Test C.G.M. 62, Teacher's Manual in English*, Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1967.

¹⁸ H. H. Stern (ed.), *Foreign Languages in Primary Education*, A Report of the UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, 1963, pp. 77-78.

8. Gabrielle, Sister Marie, and Sister Raymond de Jesus. "FLES: A Comparative Study." *Modern Language Journal*, 1964, 48, 72-76.
9. Guerra, Emilio et al. "The New York City Foreign Language Oral Ability Rating Scale." *Modern Language Journal*, 1964, 486-489.
10. Halsall, Elizabeth. "A Comparative Study of Attainments in French." *International Review of Education*, 1963-4, 9, 41-59.
11. Leutnegger, Ralph R., and Mueller, Theodore H. "Auditory Factors and the Acquisition of French Language Mastery." *Modern Language Journal*, 1964, 48, 141-146.
12. Leutnegger, Ralph R.; Mueller, T. H.; and Wershow, I. R. "Auditory Factors in Foreign Language Acquisition." *Modern Language Journal*, 1965, 49, 22-31.
13. Mueller, Klaus A. "Experimentation and Research in the Development of Modern Foreign Language Materials and Teaching Methods," *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 1962, 28, 92-104.
14. Pimsleur, Paul; Mosberg, L.; and Morrison, A. V. "Student Factors in Foreign Language Learning, A Review of the Literature." *Modern Language Journal*, 1962, 46, 160-170.
15. Pimsleur, Paul; Stockwell, R. P.; and Comrey, A. L. "Language Learning Ability." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1962, 53, 15-26.
16. Scherer, George A. "The Sine Qua Nons in FLES," *The German Quarterly*, 1964, 37.
17. Stern, H. H. (ed.) *Foreign Languages in Primary Education*. A Report of the UNESCO Institute for Education Hamburg, 1963.
18. Walsh, Donald D. "The Foreign Language Program in 1963." *Hispania*, 1963, 47, 375-379.

Tests

1. Baltimore County French Test. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1962.
2. Carroll-Sapon Modern Language Aptitude Test. New York: The Psychological Corporation, 1959.
3. CREDIF, *Test C.G.M. 62, Teacher's Manual in English*. Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1967.
4. Common Concepts Foreign Language Test. Monterey, Calif.: California Test Bureau, 1962.
5. MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Tests. Princeton, N. J.: Educational Testing Service, 1963.
6. Parlons Français. Boston: Heath de Rochemont.
7. Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966.
8. Wepman Auditory Discrimination Test. Language Research Associates, 1958.

ALTERNATIVE TO NORMATIVE TESTS

Evaluation of the achievement of FLES students is highly critical for it is only through evaluation that we can measure both the individual student's progress and the progress of the entire FLES program. A recent article in the NEA Journal, states that the time has come for the foreign-language profession to take two steps which would make it easier for all FLES programs to realize their potential. These steps are: "reaching a clear definition of objectives in terms of behavior, structure, and vocabulary" and "developing devices for evaluation and testing as a means of improving FLES instruction and insuring the achievement of FLES goals as defined."¹

Each school system should set up its FLES program with both the general functions and objectives of the foreign-language program and then the specific objectives for each year's course spelled out in terms of the changes expected in the student's behavior. These should be developed realistically and in accord with the other areas of the elementary-school curriculum. Evaluating both the achievement of individual students and the effectiveness of the total program is possible in a program where objectives are clearly determined and revised as necessary.

The functions of a foreign-language study in the elementary school might be broken into two sections—those for all students participating and, in addition, those for students who intend to continue the study of the foreign language.

The following will perhaps serve as an example.

Functions of Foreign-Language Study in Elementary Schools

For all students:

1. Improve the student's skill in oral communication
2. Develop his understanding of the nature of foreign-language study
3. Broaden his understanding of cultures other than his own
4. Enhance his learning through correlation of foreign-language study with other phases of the curriculum.

For students continuing foreign-language study:

5. Increase the student's interest in and capacity for using foreign language
6. Promote his competency in the foreign language studied.

¹ Filomena Peloro del Olmo & Guillermo del Olmo, "FLES Programs," *NEA Journal*, May 1967, p. 43.

Once having developed the general functions that foreign-language study should serve at this level, the objectives should be spelled out specifically and each should relate to the functions the language study is to serve. These objectives would include three major areas: abilities and skills; understandings; and appreciations, attitudes, and interests.

1. Abilities and Skills

The area of abilities and skills includes:

1. *the ability to use language skills* in which the student should (a) listen with purpose and (b) respond orally in a variety of situations, and
2. *the ability to use the foreign language* in which the student should (a) demonstrate a partial control of the basic sound system of the foreign language, (b) speak at a normal tempo in conversation within the range of his experience, and possibly
3. *read and write* in limited quantities material previously mastered orally.

2. Understandings

One of the primary areas of understandings might be *the essential sameness of man* in which the student could (a) give examples of the nature of man's common basic needs and (b) compare the nature of social institutions which man has devised for the satisfaction of his basic needs. A second area of understanding might be *the diverse influences that countries and cultures have upon our world* in which the student could (a) identify some of the contributions of other nations in the area of fine arts and (b) contrast the nature of economic, scientific, and political influences of various nations.

3. Appreciations—Attitudes and Interests

The third category of objectives might include (a) *an appreciation for the cultural heritage of another people* in which the student could acquire familiarity with some of the major artistic and scientific contributions of other nations and see the interrelationship of some artistic and scientific endeavor, (b) *the development of the attitude of acceptance toward differences in ways of living* in which the student could demonstrate an awareness of the factors which cause differences among various cultures and show open-mindedness in contacts with people of various cultural backgrounds, and (c) *fostering an interest in further study of foreign language* so that the student could (1) use this experience as a basis for judging his own capacity in foreign languages and (2) project him-

self into future possibilities using foreign language in job or leisure time activities.

The first two areas (abilities, skills and understandings) can be taught along lines determined by specific objectives defined within the years' programs, whereas the third area (appreciations, attitudes, and interests) develops gradually during the process of mastering abilities and understandings.

To illustrate the specific objectives that might be developed within the framework of the general functions and general objectives that have been suggested, the following might be appropriate to the first-year's program.

**Specific Objectives—First Year—Foreign-Language Study
in the Elementary School**

I. Abilities and Skills

A. Ability to use audio-lingual skills

1. To listen with purpose, the student can:
 - a. follow directions given orally,
 - b. comprehend oral questions.
2. To respond orally in a variety of situations, the student can:
 - a. answer questions in a group or individually,
 - b. participate in dialogues,
 - c. recite a poem or some verse.

B. Ability to use the foreign language

1. To demonstrate a partial control of the basic sound system, the student can:
 - a. differentiate between and reproduce vowel sounds,
 - b. reproduce nasal sounds,
 - c. identify consonants sounds.
2. To speak at a normal tempo in conversation, the student can:
 - a. discuss topics such as everyday activities, family, home and school,
 - b. use vocabulary and expressions such as numbers from 1 to 50, time by even hours and half hours, common expressions of courtesy, simple expressions of weather, color, clothing, food, animals, and other vocabulary related to dialogues,
 - c. employ grammatical structures of the following in oral situations: declarative and interrogative sentences; affirmative and negative sentences; various persons of

some present tense regular verbs and common irregular verbs; number and gender and possession.

3. To read and write in limited quantities—does not apply at this level.

II. Understandings

A. The essential sameness of man

1. To show his understanding of the nature of man's common basic needs, the student can:
 - a. identify typical meals and discuss shopping and eating customs,
 - b. converse about family members and pets and describe a typical day for children in the foreign country.
2. To show his understanding of the nature of social institutions, the student can:
 - a. describe a regular school day, the subjects studied and school customs and dress,
 - b. recognize common holidays in the foreign country and our country and tell how they are celebrated.

B. The diverse influences that countries and cultures have upon the world

1. To show his understanding of the knowledge of the artistic contributions of countries where the language is spoken, the student can:
 - a. sing some folk songs in the foreign language,
 - b. recognize stories and fables that children in the other country would know.
2. To show his understanding of the nature of the foreign country's economic influence, the student can:
 - a. identify several major industries of the country.

Once the specific objectives have been designed for a particular school system, an evaluative procedure should be set up. In addition to testing devices available in FLES, which will be discussed in another report, there are four main ways of checking or evaluating achievement: (1) teacher-made paper and pencil tests, (2) oral check testing, (3) performance in dialogues, or other regular oral class work, and (4) oral or written reports.

The teacher-made paper and pencil test could be used to check vocabulary (IB 2 b) * grammatical structures (IB 2 c), comprehension of oral questions (IA 1 b), and answering oral questions (IA 2 a). It could be a multiple-choice, true-false, or picture-

* Refers to preceding outline of example first-year objectives.

selection test. The second, oral check testing, might be taped for later evaluation or checked as the student performs. This procedure could be used to evaluate following directions given orally (I A 1 a), answering questions individually (I A 2 a), reciting a poem or verses (I A 2 c), demonstrating partial control of the sound system (I B 1 a, b, and c), and discussing topics in the foreign language (I B 2 a, b, c). The third, performance in dialogues or other regular oral class work, would check achievement of all areas of I—ability to use audio-lingual skills and ability to use the foreign language. The fourth, oral and written reports, would be used to check the area of cultural understandings. It might range from a formal written or oral report, to outside projects (such as planning a week's visit in the foreign country or writing a series of letters or a diary as if the student were in the foreign country), to reports on books about or set within the foreign country, to class discussions of various aspects of the foreign culture, or to an informal subjective evaluation of interest shown by the class in films or other presentations about the other country.

It is suggested that the people involved in the evaluation of student achievement go through their listing of specific goals and note what type or types of evaluative device can be used for each goal. Then, under each type of evaluative tool, list the particular items which are appropriate to be checked, and set up a schedule indicating when each will be used. If the specific goals have been set up in terms of changes in student behavior, they will provide firm foundation for evaluating the individual student, the FLES program, for refining or revising goals, and for reporting progress to administrators, the general public, and to members of the teaching profession who are not foreign-language teachers. The description of goals, combined with the whole evaluative process, will also aid in setting up an articulated program with the Junior High School. Such data also provides the opportunity for involving the FLES student in evaluating his own progress and seeing the direction he will be taking; perhaps the teacher can set up with the children what they will be doing for a period of time (2 or 4 weeks), and then at the end of that time ask them to check their own or their classes' achievement on each item.

It is unfortunate that in some foreign-language classes (as well as in other subject areas), children are often unaware of the purpose of the activities in which they are engaged. Even in a situation where no specific goals have been established and no evaluative procedures have been instituted, the questions still are raised:

EVALUATIVE PRACTICES

39/40

"What are you doing?", "Where are you going?" Typically, the responses common to both children and teachers must be: "We are doing nothing.", "We are going nowhere."

CAROL FISHER
Dearborn Public Schools

41/42

III. FEEDBACK AS A SOURCE OF INPUT

CHILDREN'S NEEDS CHILDREN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

While convinced that FLES instruction should be serious and systematic, the author of the first essay submits that learning will decrease as interest lags. It is, therefore, incumbent on the teacher, on the basis of observable student reactions, to provide language activities enjoyable and productive for each member of the class. Individual as well as group reactions point to the necessity of flexibility in modifying content, strategies, and objectives in such a way as to make at least some degree of success possible for each student.

The second essay illustrates the relevance of children's opinions to curriculum planning. Analysis of student responses is seen as instrumental to the modification of teacher attitudes and teaching style, improved course content, and sequencing of instruction in the several language skills. The student may indeed be our best source of information as we try to determine how he will learn what best and at what stage of instruction.

ROGER A. PILLET
The University of Chicago

CHILDREN'S NEEDS

What is meant by student success in FLES? No doubt, there are many interpretations depending on the aims of program as well as the function of the person discussing the outcomes expected. According to the dictionary, success is defined as "a favorable termination of a venture." To succeed is "to attain a desired object or end." Granted, FLES is usually not considered a terminated venture or an end in itself. It has been stated most emphatically that foreign language in the elementary school must be considered as a part of a long-sequence program.¹ But for the young elementary-school student, our well-worded, carefully articulated long-range objectives have little meaning. Success for these children must be immediate, daily—and in terms of their own sense of accomplishment and pleasure. It must be related to their individual maturity, needs, values, and interests.

For the teacher, especially the FLES specialist, the primary objective is usually a satisfactory degree of language skill. Success in terms of foreign-language proficiency can be measured. In fact, it has been effectively measured in some FLES programs of long standing. Among the outstanding reports of this sort is a study made of language performance by FLES students in the schools of Lexington, Massachusetts.² The students chosen for this study were drawn from a cross-section of the student body rather than a selection of superior students. The subjects for the study were two groups of fifty-four students selected randomly from some who started French in grade 7 and others who had started French in grade 3. Near the completion of the 11th grade, both groups were administered the MLA Cooperative Examinations (French, Advanced Forms) testing the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The results indicated that the FLES group performed significantly better on all four tests compared to the other group. It must be added that there are factors in the set-up of this program that favor achievement by the student in the language skills. Among these is the quality of teaching done by specialists in a coordinated program. In addition, it is probable that many of the students are motivated by parental interest, as well as by a favorable

¹ Modern Language Association, *Foreign Languages in the Elementary School: Second Statement of Policy*, 1961.

² Brega, Evelyn and John M. Newell, *Performance on Modern Language Association Tests by Regular and FLES Students in French, 1967* (a follow-up of a previous study made in 1965).

intellectual environment in the home and a school fostering an interest in foreign people, their language, and culture. But these factors do not negate the positive, reliable evidence of increased individual achievement in language skills by a long-sequence program started in the elementary grades. Fortunately, we are getting reports of this sort to support our claims regarding the language proficiency of our FLES graduates.

It is also evident that programs with the above-mentioned type of success and progress have been limited in number compared to the many FLES programs that were started (and sometimes discontinued) since about 1955 when the FLES movement took on impetus. In addition to planning, the problems of adequately prepared staff, satisfactory teaching materials and other administrative considerations, there is another problem that must be faced squarely and considered in depth. That is, making the FLES program a meaningful, enjoyable experience for the child, so that a degree of success—in *his* terms—is possible. The answer does not lie, as we have seen, in an unstructured program in which a form of play takes the place of learning. Nor does the answer lie in teaching language in a vacuum unrelated to the elementary-school curriculum or the student's maturity and interests. The probability of success for the FLES student of average ability in the average American school depends on an understanding of the child's psychological and intellectual development, and of the problems presented by lack of motivation and individual differences.

Progress has been made within the past few years in producing teaching materials that, in general, appeal to children in the elementary and intermediate grades and that conform to acceptable teaching procedures for students of those ages. Besides, these materials, prepared by groups of experts and produced commercially, provide the teacher with attractive, professional components for effective teaching. Proper use of such materials can help the FLES student to progress in the acquisition of language skills and simple cultural concepts of the countries where the languages are spoken. This sense of accomplishment is of vital importance to the student. He must feel that he is moving ahead in a meaningful and interesting manner, that he can do well what is asked of him and enjoy doing it. The question is what is happening when the student fails to achieve. Why does his interest lag in spite of improved teaching materials and good teaching procedures in the language skills? Why has this venture become unsuccessful and lost meaning for the student? In that case we are faced with problems of motivation and individual differences—or possibly both.

The problem of motivation in foreign-language learning is a very complex one. The young student may be motivated to learn the foreign language at first because it is an enjoyable new experience, and because his parents and teacher have transmitted their enthusiasm to him and he wants to please them. But, after a while, the enchantment wears off. This may be due to a number of reasons. The course content may fail to provide the challenge, interest, and approach needed for the FLES student.³ Or the student becomes bored because he can see no relationship between learning a foreign language and other activities in the school curriculum.⁴ Another reason for his dying interest may be failure to increase and keep alive the student's natural curiosity about foreign peoples. It is interesting to note that our young Americans rate high in this respect. According to a study made by Lambert and Klineberg,⁵ "the American children's overall similarity outlooks (that is, regarding foreign peoples as 'like us') and their expressions of affection for foreign peoples increase significantly from the ten- to fourteen-year period." In fact, on the "affection index" the ten- and fourteen-year-old American children rate at the top of the cross-national comparisons made by these authors. This would seem to indicate that we may have underestimated or neglected the need to provide opportunities whereby a FLES student may have some tangible contact with foreign young people who speak the language he is studying. An interesting experiment now in progress has shown definite, positive results in achievement and attitude toward foreigners and foreign-language learning when there are "live" interpersonal-intercultural exchanges between FLES students and French children in France. The program, conducted at the College of Mount St. Joseph on the Ohio, consists of a "twinning classroom" approach, which makes use of a carefully controlled exchange of tapes, slides, photos, drawings, etc. between the French and American groups of children. In her report, Sister Adelaide expresses a concern for the individual's ability to maintain interest during the long period of study needed for proficiency

³ del Olmo, Filomena Peloro and Guillermo del Olmo, "FLES in Search of Discipline and Content," *DFL Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 1, Washington, D. C.: National Education Association. Garibaldi, Virginia, "Maintaining Children's Interest in a FLES Sequence," *DFL Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 3 (Guidelines to development of content and teaching approach).

⁴ Pillet, Roger et al., *FLES and the Contemporary Elementary Schools* (AATF-FLES Report for 1966), Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1967 (Suggestions for correlation with other areas of the curriculum).

⁵ Lambert, Wallace E. and Otto Klineberg, *Children's Views of Foreign Peoples*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967, pp. 180, 189.

in a foreign language. She states that the "intensity of the attitudes motivating the language learner" is affected by the opportunity for "authentic interpersonal relations" rather than "make-believe ones," and by "communication with his peers" rather than with adults.⁶ In other words, this FLES venture is successful for the student if he can relate it in a realistic and meaningful way to himself and his peers, no matter where they are geographically located.

The problem of individual differences in the acquisition of language skills at the elementary-school level was clearly identified and explained a number of years ago in the five-year study made by Dunkel and Pillet (1962). This has been confirmed in a report made by Kellerman (1964) concerning the English experiment with foreign-language teaching carried out in the primary schools of Leeds and sponsored by the Leeds Education Authority in cooperation with the Nuffield Foundation. On the same subject, Stern writes in an international study of FLES that "the pattern of performance in primary schools in different parts of the world and on various assessments of pupils in foreign-language instruction shows that approximately 20% are labelled excellent, 40% good, 25% fair, and 15% poor—(revealing) measurable differences in linguistic ability even for young children." In view of these facts, he adds that "one urgent task of the future will be to devise methods to help the slow language learner to achieve a modicum of success. If language teaching will take up a certain amount of school time each day, it is most important that pupils are not for years exposed to nothing but a daily dose of frustration and failure."⁷ He does not advocate a program for a selected group of students, nor dropping out of the program at any point in the primary-school period of instruction.

Pillet defines in specific terms individual learning problems in the areas of language aptitudes and intellectual capacities. He labels as "aptitudes that are basically physiological—aural acuity or aural discrimination and the ability to mimic." In the realm of intellectual capacities, he lists "the ability to memorize, retention, association, capacity for analyzing, and the talent for analogizing." In a plea for a realistic and practical approach to individualizing instruction in FLES, Pillet explains that in his opinion "no single corpus

⁶ Sister Ruth Adelaide, S.C., *A Twinned Classroom Approach to the Teaching of French in the Elementary Class* (Report of Progress on the project under contract with U. S. Office of Education).

⁷ Stern, H. H., "FLES: Achievements and Problems," *Trends in Language Teaching* (Valdman, editor), New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966 (pages 275, 276).

of material, no single medium, no single methodology is entirely appropriate to the individual needs of all the members of the class." Furthermore, he states that "attitude toward foreign-language learning will become negative in proportion to lack of success in the foreign-language class."⁸

Both Pillet and Stern suggest that the chances of success for the FLES student lie in a more flexible and eclectic approach to teaching procedures and course content than has been generally prevalent up to the present. In Stern's words, "it is important at the present time to forestall the development of a narrow dogmatism in FLES practice." He invites us to be more tolerant of the student's desire to read and write, to reconsider our stand regarding the ability of children to absorb without conscious attention, to investigate more thoroughly the desirability of conceptualization in language learning for young children. Pillet points out that children do not all learn in the same way, even if they are of the same age. Not all learn easily through hearing. Some are definitely more visually-oriented than audio-oriented. Mimicry and memorization appeal more to some students than to others. Certain students like to work out problems, to discover the nature of what is being learned. Creative children often can and will tolerate only a limited amount of drill and repetition.

In summary, the chances for student success in FLES—as in all areas of the curriculum—depend on our ability to recognize and provide for his immediate needs. It must be a meaningful experience suited to his individual ability to learn. The tendency to fit all FLES students into one mold, to forget that the teacher's and the student's objectives are often not the same, can lead to a frustrating and unrewarding experience for the student. After all, what is more important to the student than a feeling of achievement and enjoyment? With this will come all the other important benefits that produce success.

ELIZABETH RATTÉ
Boston University

⁸ Pillet, Roger A., *Individualizing Instruction: Implication for FLES* (an address delivered at the Indiana Conference for Foreign Language Elementary School Teachers, April, 1967).

CHILDREN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

a. In the Literature

In the area of student reactions, it is not too difficult to determine attitudes and motivations, since pupils of elementary-school age are generally uninhibited in expressing their feelings. The literature cites a number of such reactions, usually positive, toward the learning of foreign languages. The pleasure of learning a language is even extended to after-school activities, when one author quoted a child's reaction to homework: "This isn't home *work*: it's home *fun*!"¹

We have all seen young children interested in different sounds and words. They love secret codes and even go so far as to make up their own languages. Donoghue, in summarizing the psychological reasons for including foreign languages in the elementary school says: "Children are intrigued by words. They are naturally curious about language, and make up new words and use old ones in new combinations. They are interested in the flow of language and like to experiment with new and different sounds. They are eager to learn new words and use them regardless of the language in which they are expressed."²

To the young child, a game situation holds tremendous appeal. Thus, FLES teachers have "sugar-coated" learning through a number of games which, in reality, are drills and exercises made interesting. ". . . Young children are more receptive to drill, which is so necessary for acquiring language habits,"³ is a comment to be found in the Northeast Conference Reports of 1964.

Thus, we have noted that young children enjoy their foreign-language work, that they take pleasure in the sound of language, and that they participate in the drills needed to learn a language. Are there any cautions to be found in the literature?

One specific caution is to be found concerning the content of the FLES lesson. Many FLES teachers vary the activities of their lessons since they have found from practical experience that children's attention span is limited. "Les jeunes enfants ont un pouvoir

¹ Margaret J. Brown, "A FLES Research and Experimental Project," *Hispania*, December, 1965, p. 893.

² Mildred Donoghue, "A Rationale for FLES," *French Review*, February, 1965, p. 527.

³ George F. Jones, Ed., *Northeast Conference Reports*, 1964, p. 4.

limité et variable d'attention." * Thus, the FLES teacher moves from warm-up to dialogue to a song to a game to a drill to a review . . . all within a 15-25-minute lesson. (For sample lesson plans showing this variety of planning, readers are referred to the sample lessons included in the New York State Bulletin, *French for Elementary Schools*.)

If we are to hold the attention of pupils in FLES, we should have an idea of the interests of these pupils. Fortunately, we can get an indication of choice of subject matter by looking at topics of reading preferences in the mother tongue of pupils of elementary-school age:

- Eight years: Fairy tales, beginning interest in stories of real life
- Nine years: Realistic stories, continued but less interest in fairy tales, reading used to satisfy curiosity
- Ten years: Adventure, stories of other lands, travel, beginning of interest in biography, myths and legends
- Eleven years: Adventure and mystery, interest in animal and nature stories declining.⁶

Although most FLES pupils are "highly motivated . . . and respond with enthusiasm to discussions of what a second language may contribute to an individual's success in life . . ." there are a number of pupils who are not reached. Perhaps the solution lies in the advice given by Eriksson, Mulhauser and Forest: ". . . the teacher should make serious effort to find out what orientations they do in fact possess and toward what constructive goals they may be directed easily. Self-esteem and self-actualization are two universal human needs."⁷

Thus, we must come to grips with the problem of holding and reaching all our FLES pupils, particularly as far as the content of the curriculum. We must also take into account that, although the great majority of young children are able to imitate and produce the foreign sounds accurately, "there are youngsters who, in spite of careful conscientious listening, will never be able to hear the discrepancies or variations in sound. There are also youngsters who

* René Coulet du Gard, "Quelques Conseils pour l'enseignement du FLES," *French Review*, February, 1965, p. 533.

⁶ *French for Elementary Schools*, N. Y. State Bulletin, 1966, pp. 25-35.

⁷ Terman and Lima survey, as quoted in David Russel, *Children Learn to Read*, Ginn, 1961, p. 377.

⁸ Eriksson, Forest, Mulhauser, *Foreign Languages in the Elementary School*, p. 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*

can hear well and who can discriminate successfully between all the phonemes and allophones of the two languages and because of physical interferences have difficulty in producing the sounds of the new language." * This range of achievement and even a hint of a lack of interest on the part of some FLES pupils were first indicated by Dunkel and Pillet: "... our students were becoming bored with the completely oral-aural approach."¹⁰ Obviously, a "yearning to communicate with others who speak a foreign tongue"¹¹ is not sufficient; teachers have to be constantly on the *qui vive* for ways to interest all pupils, methods which will help all pupils meet with success, and ways to provide for individual needs.

b. Anecdotal Reports from Several FLES Programs

In order to determine whether pupil attitudes in FLES classes are in harmony with the ideas expressed in the literature, an open-ended attitude questionnaire was sent to seven school systems across the country. The AATF Committee is grateful to the following communities who participated in the survey:

Beverly Hills, California
Cleveland, Ohio
Farmingdale, L. I., New York
Greenwich, Connecticut
Houston, Texas
Lexington, Massachusetts
New York City, New York

It must be noted that this was a limited survey. No attempt was made to uncover attitudes of all pupils in each school system. *Two classes on each grade* (grades 3-6) were examined from each school system. The results should provide us with some trends, indications, notions of what pupils really think about their study of foreign language. For the most part, their ideas were expressed clearly and in an uninhibited manner, as will be seen from some of the material cited.

No attempt was made to get a representative sample from various types of FLES programs, although there are responses from most of these, e.g. specialist teacher, TV, reading and writing introduced early or late, foreign language offered to all pupils or to

* Hilario S. Peña, "Practical Linguistics for the FLES Teacher," in Levenson and Kendrick, *Readings in Foreign Languages for the Elementary School*, p. 222.

¹⁰ Harold Dunkel and Roger Pillet, *French in the Elementary School*, p. 46.

¹¹ Gladys Lipton, "New Trends in FLES—A Quiet Optimism," *Hispania*, March, 1967, p. 124.

a limited number, etc. However, responses indicate that no matter from which locality, whether from a large school system or from a small school system, pupil responses were astonishingly *consistent*. A total of 1650 questionnaires was involved, 858 girls, 792 boys.

The following questionnaire was used:

1. What do you like most about studying a foreign language?
2. What do you like least about studying a foreign language?
3. How do you think studying a foreign language will help you later on?

Although the questionnaire was open-ended, the responses fell into identifiable categories:

- | | | |
|----------|-------------------------|--|
| Grade 3: | Response to question 1: | dramatizations, speaking,
songs, games |
| | Response to question 2: | reading, writing, tests |
| Grade 4: | Response to question 1: | dramatizations, speaking,
songs, games |
| | Response to question 2: | reading, writing, tests, home-
work, don't understand |
| Grade 5: | Response to question 1: | dramatizations, speaking,
reading, songs, games |
| | Response to question 2: | writing, tests, boring, don't
understand, homework |
| Grade 6: | Response to question 1: | speaking, reading, culture,
games |
| | Response to question 2: | writing, tests, boring, don't
understand, homework |

These were the major categories *determined by the children*. There were relatively few differences of opinion between girls and boys. Both girls and boys agreed on the preference for speaking activities, and disliked writing, tests and homework. More boys expressed a decided dislike for the entire study of foreign language than girls. More boys found the study of foreign language boring, and did not understand the work, but this number was relatively low in the entire sample studied.

The responses for question number 3 (How do you think studying a foreign language will help you later on?) were consistent in all grades, in all communities, with no difference of opinion for boys and girls. The responses fell into the following categories:

- travel
- help me in my job
- help me in my future study of foreign language

Fewer than 10 pupils said they did not know how their study of foreign language would help them, while nearly 90% said that it would help if they traveled to foreign countries. Thus, the majority of the students had a clear idea of the objectives of foreign language study. The following responses may be of interest:

"Many foreigners feel if you go to the trouble to learn the language you'll probably find you get better treatment, even though you don't speak it too fluently."

"If you become an author, you could write in many languages."

"If I go in the army and they send me to France, at least I could get meals and talk to people."

"If I go to France, I can speak if I had an accident on the street."

There were few negative responses with respect to objectives of foreign-language study:

"The thing I like least about studying the language is the thought of never being able to use it."

"I do not like the little unimportant things that you have to learn, because you will probably never use them."

"You might know French so much, you might not be able to talk English."

Concerning their view of successful learning and evaluation of learning, some of the pupils responded as follows:

"I like the good feeling that you get when you can speak another language."

"I don't like tests because I don't really want to know how good or bad I am. I just like to know that I'm slowly but surely learning."

"I don't like making mistakes."

"I don't like hearing other people's mistakes."

Some children found the study of foreign languages very hard:

"I don't really hate it but I just can't get to the right way of speaking it with the right accent. Maybe if we had books to study I might somehow say it better."

"If you do not understand something, you could go forever and still not understand it."

"It breaks almost every English rule."

On the other hand, there were those pupils who complained about it being too easy:

"I don't like the childish things they teach us."

"We don't learn enough."

"I love French but I wish we could have a little more homework."

Perhaps FLES teachers can gain valuable tips on teaching from the following:

"What I like most about studying French is the way that the teachers make it fun for you to learn. We have plays and play games which make learning French more enjoyable."

"I don't like the repetition, over and over and over of words in different ways."

"We go over the dialogues until we know them backward, forward, and upside down."

"The same old questions about how do you say 'I have' in French. I wish we could learn how to say things that we'll need in everyday life like, 'Taxi, Taxi.'"

"It is not like something you have to learn but you want to."

"What I like least about studying French is that sometimes you are just too tired."

"I don't like it for I have a habit of day-dreaming in class."

"I don't like to wait until everyone is able to say it. I like to go ahead."

There were some very positive notions about the time allotments:

"I don't like it when the time runs out fast."

"The thing I like least is stopping the lesson."

"15 minutes is too short a time to learn."

Some pupils spoke glowingly of their FLES teachers:

"When we don't understand something my teacher explains it so clearly that we get it."

"The teacher is not mean."

"My teacher is the greatest—give her a raise."

The greatest value of using a "Madison Avenue approach" is to try to give the "customer" what he wants. Answers to the following questions are needed if we are to move in the direction of greater pupil interest and pupil success:

1. What is the optimum schedule for FLES classes?
2. What type of personality should the teacher have?

3. Should speaking be a prominent part of FLES classes on all levels?
4. When should reading be introduced?
5. When should writing be introduced and practiced?
6. What kind of tests should be used? When should they be used?
7. How can pupils develop more "here and now" objectives for foreign-language study?
8. How can we provide for each child's learning at his own rate?
9. How can we keep pupils interested even when there is repetition?
10. How can foreign-language study become part of the entire school curriculum?

GLADYS LIPTON
Bureau of Foreign Languages
New York City

55/56

IV. FEEDBACK: A LONGITUDINAL VIEW

FLES IN RETROSPECT

The single essay in this section is a résumé of a more extensive study attempting to collect student and teacher responses to FLES and its implications for subsequent instruction. The number of contradictory statements about the relative merits of instruction in the grades, the less than universal endorsement of goals and practices, the sometimes casual concern for articulation suggest sober re-appraisal and, in some cases at least, a wide credibility gap between program designers and consumers.

Perhaps there is a lesson to be learned here relative to the serious business of FLES instruction. The present trend is for teachers to have more of a voice in curriculum development. As evidence in this report, through student response, there was the opportunity for teachers to become involved in a very exciting venture when the movement for early beginnings in language study was first initiated. It would behoove all those now involved in the development of curriculum to listen to what the pupil is saying. As in other areas of the elementary program, the future will demand that the pupil be involved in curriculum planning. A child has very definite insights as to his needs and these needs, of necessity, must be incorporated into any FLES program if it is to succeed.

ROGER A. PILLET

The University of Chicago

FLES IN RETROSPECT

What has become of the children who began their study of a foreign language in elementary school five, ten, fifteen and more years ago? What have been their experiences with foreign language since their elementary-school days and how do they regard their FLES classes in retrospect? The answers to these questions from former FLES pupils shed light upon values and shortcomings of FLES programs of the past. The study of accounts by students who have lived through a portion of FLES history helps us to recognize that in which we have been successful and where we have erred in judgment.

Responses from former FLES pupils represented thirty-eight different schools in seventeen communities of eight states. Answers to questions about the number of foreign-language lessons per week, minutes per lesson, the point at which reading and writing were introduced are hazy in the memory of many former FLES pupils; but their attitudes about their elementary-school foreign-language experience are definite and are expressed frankly.

As might be expected, one-half of the students who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they liked the foreign-language period in elementary school "just about as well as most other subjects." Approximately one-third were "very enthusiastic" and one-sixth found it "boring or otherwise distasteful." One might wonder about the seemingly high percentage of students who responded that they were very enthusiastic about their foreign language study in elementary school, especially when, in most cases, it was compulsory. In a group of unselected students, a majority of students responding that they like the foreign language about as well as most other subjects would seem to be what we should expect. Two factors must be considered in looking at these responses. First, among those who were enrolled in programs for gifted students, three-quarters of the students were enthusiastic. However, it is quite possible that the student who was enthusiastic about or satisfied with his FLES experience was more likely to take the trouble to fill out the questionnaire and return it, while those for whom it had been an unpleasant experience would choose not to be reminded of it. This certainly may be true in many cases, but even those who responded with enthusiasm were frank in their criticisms of the programs in which they were enrolled.

In the space provided for personal comment in answer to this question, among those who had indicated that they were enthusi-

astic about the FLES classes, some stated that their classmates were equally enthusiastic; others admitted that they represented the exception, rather than the rule, in liking FLES. Many of their comments provide insight into the reasons for their reactions, favorable and unfavorable:

The teacher was a lot of fun.

The children who were good in the language liked it and those who were poor in the language hated it.

In the grammar school, almost all the students were enthusiastic. This died out in junior high when we began receiving grades.

I like it very much. This was due to the variation in everyday English assignments and the teacher's personality. Those who had above average aptitude enjoyed it but those who did not adapt to it lost interest.

I think everyone found it to be a new and interesting subject.

I had a succession of excellent teachers.

The comments of students who liked FLES about as well as other subjects are more critical about their FLES programs:

The majority of the class was bored because they didn't understand the material.

Basic grammar should have been taught before just memorizing facts so as to understand better.

We spent very little time studying the language and very little interest was aroused in the language.

Most of the other students looked at it as a period where they didn't have to do anything but fool around.

The teacher was uninspiring and boring with poor pronunciation. I couldn't mimic well and couldn't see a word of written French until the fourth year.

It was my favorite subject because of a sparkling teacher, later because of the works we read. I was more enthusiastic than most. All of us disliked the language in the fifth grade; the lessons were an hour long and involved far more advanced grammar than what we knew in English.

It was not taught as much as we would have liked. There was insufficient time to learn the language. Classes were mixed. The fast kids were held back by the slow ones. The slow ones were pushed.

There was no sincere attempt to make the class truly enjoyable and interesting or to provide any initiative to move ahead. From third grade to sixth, the class was kept at practically the same level of material—wasted years.

Students who answered that they found their FLES experience boring or otherwise distasteful state concretely the reasons for their dislike of FLES:

We just said hello and goodbye to everyone—that's all we had time for.

The knowledge given to us about the language was so slim. We were only able to point to a few objects and say their name. We never learned enough to be able to do anything with it.

The teacher taught us very little that would be of later use.

Progress was slow. It wasn't taken too seriously by anyone; there was no pressure for grades. We didn't do anything but see films and hear tapes. Most of the others were bored too, but some liked it.

Clearly, students' dislike of FLES stems from faults of programs in which they were enrolled, rather than from any dislike of foreign language per se. These faults, in order of frequency of mention, can be summarized as follows:

1. Insufficiency of the amount of foreign language taught.
2. Poor teaching techniques.
3. Insufficient time devoted to foreign-language study.
4. Objectionable teacher personality.
5. Lack of standards of discipline.
6. Lack of standards of performance.
7. No use or unwise use made of audio-visual aids.

While numbers of students indicated that their original enthusiasm had waned because they felt they were not learning enough, only one student complained about the "involved grammar" given to her fifth-grade class, and this student liked the subject very well in previous and in later grades. The question put to the students asked only how well the students had liked FLES, but in answering the question the students anticipated a later question: "Do you feel that you learned much of the foreign language in the classes up to and including the sixth grade?" The answers to this question will be analyzed subsequently.

Comments such as "I didn't understand what we were doing," "At first it was great fun and rather easy to learn simple words,"

"We just said hello and goodbye to everyone," "We didn't do anything but see films and hear tapes," and "We were only able to point to a few objects and say their names," are all indicative of poor and inadequate teaching techniques. The student who advised that "basic grammar should have been taught before just memorizing facts" does not fully understand how the teaching of the foreign language could have been improved, but he does indicate to us directly that elementary-school pupils are ready to learn how a language works. A diet of a dialogue memorization or lists of unrelated words, neither satisfies the students nor does the job of teaching a language.

The amount of time accorded foreign-language study in the elementary school is something not completely within the control of the foreign-language teacher. We appreciate too, the problems of administrators in trying to squeeze even a few minutes a few times a week out of an already loaded elementary-school day, but the cry of a great majority of FLES graduates, "not enough time to learn anything meaningful" should be made known to them.

Although teacher personality appears fourth on the list in frequency of mention, the personality of the teacher seems to be a key factor in students' like or dislike of the subject. Many more statements involving teacher personality appeared on the positive side. Many students talked of "interesting," "inspiring," "enthusiastic," or "sparkling," qualities in their teachers which made them like the subject. Often a teacher with an attractive personality and enthusiasm for teaching the subject compensates for other shortcomings of the program.

As has been remarked time and again, children do not appreciate laxity; they want to know that there are definite, reasonable standards of discipline and performance and they want to be held to them. Good students resent having their time wasted while their classmates "fool around," and poor students like an adult no better for his permissiveness. Moreover, good students are as prone as poor students to taking advantage of laxity. They openly admit it and they blame the adult; they need the firmness of an adult against which to lean their desire and resolution to accomplish.

Those students who mentioned the use of audio-visual aids can be divided into two groups. In one group were those who complained that the course might have been made more interesting if only they had seen some films, pictures, models, heard some recordings or had sung some songs. The other group includes those who had done nothing but look at films and listen to tapes without ever understanding what was going on. In the latter case, instruction

seems to have been entirely de-personalized with no attempt made to relate material to the children's personal lives. Most often, in these cases, the children did not grasp the meaning of what they were seeing or hearing. "Everything in moderation" would certainly seem to apply to the use of audio-visual aids in FLES. Certainly, audio-visual aids enhance the meaning of the foreign-language experience for the children; that is their function. But the aids enhance teaching only, they do not make an effective substitute for teaching.

Students are amazingly perceptive in their analysis of the inadequacies of FLES programs and are definite in their statements of what was needed in order to improve them. All of their suggestions resolve into a plea for more—more time, more grammar, more reading and writing, more of the language spoken in class, more emphasis on the serious side of language learning and more planning.

Some of the statements of students appear to contradict each other. One student who began the study of a foreign language in the third grade feels that third grade is too soon; another advises that the foreign language should be begun in the first grade. The student who felt that third grade was too soon claimed that all that was learned in the third grade was repeated in the fourth and fifth grades. Probably the majority of students would feel this way about all of their schooling if the same material were rehashed for three successive years. Why begin at age eight if you are still at the same point in knowledge and skills at age eleven? While most of the students who speak about the lack of time are referring to the number of lessons per week and the number of minutes per lesson, rather than the number of years, the foreign-language teaching profession will not be able to justify the demand for either more minutes, more days or more years unless that time already accorded is being used efficaciously.

Students at even the elementary-school level want and expect more than just "exposure" or "familiarization" with the language. Those who consider the foreign language a game and who feel that a more serious approach would "spoil the fun" are in a very small minority. Even those who liked feeling that they were not under pressure to learn because no grades were given in elementary school, later turned face about in their attitude toward the language when grades were given and it became a serious study. The pattern of thought about foreign-language study had been set and the change was resented. There is much talk by teachers about learning for the sake of learning, rather than for the sake of grades;

but grades are still with us in most schools. In a school in which all subjects but one are graded, students inevitably regard the exception as less important and less worth their serious attention.

The giving of grades is the extrinsic factor in impelling student progress. Good teaching must, as it always has, be the wellspring for continuing student interest, their sense of progress and pride in accomplishment. The ability to "point to a few objects and name them" or to be able to count from one to one hundred or to rattle off the names of the days of the week and perhaps a few well-learned phrases does not hold lasting interest. The students' sense of progress and pride in accomplishment grows only with their increasing ability to express themselves and to communicate with each other through their new language. This is really what students are saying when they plead for more grammar. They want to learn how to manipulate the parts they have learned so that they can use the language to say what they want to say. This should be one of the prime objectives of FLES: helping students to say things they want to say. Many of the very enthusiastic students quoted above conceded that FLES had provided a "good foundation," but the student who said that they didn't build upon it placed his finger on the heart of the problem: lack of planning. Teaching the grammar or structure of a language in such a way that students gradually build ability to express themselves requires carefully sequenced lessons, not only from lesson to lesson, but also from year to year. Any teacher or program that does not do this is deceiving himself or itself, and truly wasting the children's time.

A good part of the process of learning to express oneself in any language lies in the opportunity to hear the language spoken. A number of former FLES pupils said that there should have been more use, if not exclusive use, made of the foreign language in the classroom. As a corollary to this feeling, they said that they, the students, also should have been made to respond in the foreign language and that they should have participated more in the class. So often these students reported that all their teacher did was "just talk to us."

In most cases where reading and writing had been held off for longer than two years, students expressed impatience. The majority of students who began to study a foreign language in the third grade felt ready and impatient to start to read and write in the fifth grade. Beginners in fifth grade felt ready for reading and writing by the sixth grade. These same students do not choose to sacrifice aural-oral skills which they appear to value, as we see in such statements as "speaking skills should be developed before writing is emphasized." In a great number of cases, however, we have

doubtlessly underestimated the capacity of the children. Five- and six-year-old children starting to school have mastered the basic, and often quite complicated, structures of their native language. We fail to take full advantage of children's natural ability for language learning when we keep them solely on a diet of word lists and parroting activities. Children who have already acquired some ability to read and write in their native tongue are readier much sooner, evidently, to learn and write a second language.

Many of the students express a need for textbooks, workbooks, homework, individual work, variety, articulation at the transition points, appropriate teaching materials—in short, all the things they and the teachers have learned to expect from any course. No textbook, no workbook, no homework, like no grades, make the study of a foreign language “different” from all other subjects and, in the estimation of some students, less worthy of respect. In other students, it raises a rather vague uneasiness, if not real feelings of insecurity, for they do not know what is expected of them. They don't know how well, or if, they are progressing. There is no measuring stick. Students sense progress in other subjects because they move along further in textbooks or workbooks. Homework becomes increasingly complicated. Their grades tell them that they have mastered a certain percentage of the material, at least in the estimation of the teacher.

In a language course in which everyone learns to say the same things in the same way and nothing more, the language remains an abstract study; it never becomes something to use. This is the kind of course students are describing when they have felt a need for more individualized work, when they say that “the class was not geared to individual needs.” The student who found the films she saw “stupid” and the dialogue not related to “real usage of the language in everyday life” was talking about one of the best sets of materials available. Good materials, however, do not obviate the role of the teacher. If the teacher fails to help the students transpose what they have learned from the materials into thoughts and ideas that touch the students' personal lives, many students will continue to feel that they do not really know how to talk about things they want to talk about. Furthermore, an almost exclusive use of audio-visual aids becomes as tedious and boring as a course in which no aids are used. Both are starvation diets. Students want variety. Repetition seems to be one of the keys to language mastery. Since repetition alone easily becomes mechanical and dulling, in drilling items to be mastered, we need to vary the approach by employing every means and device at our disposition.

Although many of the students feel, in retrospect, that much

more of the foreign language should have been spoken both by the teacher and the students, they are also critical, and perhaps somewhat resentful, of having been forced to repeat and memorize a language which had no meaning for them. Students who complained that they never know what they were saying, that they had to wait until junior high school to understand what they learned or whose teacher left them to "figure it out" were most often bored. There is a great deal that students, left to their own devices, will never be able to figure out; comprehension must be taught and the habit of understanding must be cultivated from the outset. This by no means suggests a running translation of everything that is said in the foreign language, but meanings have to be conveyed through gestures, actions, demonstrations and pictures. Audio-visual aids are indispensable in teaching comprehension.

Students in foreign-language classes in the junior high school who find the transition from elementary school difficult or who learn all over again everything they had in the elementary school are victims of the lack of coordination between the levels. It would seem a simple matter for teachers at the various levels within the school system to meet and agree on specific goals to strive for on each of the levels; yet it was not done, evidently, in the schools of many of these former FLES pupils. To be sure, several of the students indicated that they had been part of an experimental or pilot program. It was the first time anything of its kind had been tried in their school system, so that many of the shortcomings of those programs have, hopefully, been corrected since these students were FLES pupils.

Despite their criticisms of FLES programs, it is rather surprising, and encouraging to note that very few of the former FLES pupils expressed a sense of futility, that FLES was a waste of time. They recognize the advantages FLES offered, despite inadequacies of programs in which they were enrolled. Many whose FLES experience was less than satisfactory are able to envision the possibilities of a good FLES program. Most of the former FLES pupils who responded to the questionnaire are aware of the contribution of FLES training to the development of oral proficiency and accurate pronunciation. A few of these pupils speak of having "slid into the language gradually" as children. One person, who feels that he is a slow learner, states that if he hadn't started young he never would have learned a language. Even when the FLES program itself did not teach a great deal, it appears to have given to many pupils a "feel for the language" which made the learning of the language easier at higher levels.

Development of an early interest in foreign languages and an awareness of other cultures is another value of FLES reported by many of the former pupils. Sometimes, the interest-arousing effect of FLES was a latent one. When pupils finally became interested, they were gratified to find they already had a foundation upon which to build.

Greater numbers of FLES pupils seem to have pursued foreign-language study further in high school and college than students who began later. All of the students who responded to the questionnaire had the opportunity to continue study of the FLES language at the junior and senior high-school levels. In many cases, continued study of the language begun in elementary school was compulsory. Of those schools where it was not compulsory, only one of the students changed to another language in the ninth grade. Many of them have continued or are planning to continue to study the language in college. FLES experience has also encouraged and permitted these students to study other languages. Having learned "how to attack a language from scratch," they have been able to learn a third language rapidly and easily.

The eagerness with which many of the former FLES pupils seize opportunities to use their foreign language, and their delight in rendering services dependent upon their knowledge of the language are as apparent among students who found FLES distasteful as it is among those who were enthusiastic and those who liked FLES just about as well as other subjects. They have used their foreign-language knowledge on their jobs and in speaking at home with brothers, sisters, and other relatives, friends and maids. They frequent foreign films and restaurants and write letters to foreign friends abroad. Many have had the opportunity to use the foreign language in travel. Some of them or their classmates have been exchange students. Others have used their language knowledge here in the United States with foreign exchange students in their schools or with foreign tourists who need help and are not fluent in English. One boy, while taking his physical examination for the draft, helped to translate instructions to Puerto Ricans because none of the doctors spoke Spanish. Another student was able to help a Frenchman retrieve his coat left on a tour bus. One student uses his Spanish playing softball with a Puerto Rican team; another uses French with the fencers in his fencing club. Many students seize the opportunity just to talk the language without formal excuse in chance encounters with native speakers visiting the United States. The uses to which former FLES pupils have put their language seem limitless. Less direct benefits of FLES accrue also.

Cases of college language exemption and advanced placement in foreign-language courses are frequently cited. In many cases, despite their eligibility for exemption from further language study in college, students have elected to continue and sometimes to major in the language. A few have chosen a career in the teaching of the language.

With an unmistakable need for improvement of FLES programs, as described by these former FLES pupils it is surprising, perhaps, that their language study has been so useful and has provided a source of interest and enjoyment in the lives of many of them. Even more striking and encouraging for the future are the responses to the question, "If you were a parent, would you support putting a foreign-language program into the grades where your children were enrolled as pupils?" Only 5.52% of the replies to this question were outright "no's."

The "no" responses definitely reflect the unrewarding elementary-school experience in a foreign language:

No, what we learned in four years of elementary-school Spanish can be learned in two months of high-school Spanish.

Not in elementary school. It only gets you mixed up and bored.

No, but I would start it in the seventh grade because I did learn a great deal there.

No, for on the grade-school level, the pupils have not had enough grammar to really grasp the language and the word-object association is worthless to me.

No, why French? English is more important.

The "yes" responses to this question were enthusiastic. Stating "definitely" that they would support FLES for schools in which their own children were enrolled, former FLES pupils included reasons and suggestions for a strong program. Many of the reasons and suggestions emphasize values that their own FLES experience has held for them. They express firm belief in the importance of being able to speak two or more languages in our present world. If the elementary school offers no foreign language, say some of these former FLES pupils, they themselves will teach their own children a foreign language. Most of the suggestions for improvement of FLES programs are not new to those who have been struggling with FLES programs. They ask for more intensive and comprehensive courses, courses that actually teach the language and do not "waste time with little games." They want the pace "stepped up," with careful planning and definite progression from year to year. An

earlier start (first and second grade or even kindergarten and preschool), equal status for FLES with other subjects, and homogeneous grouping are among the recommendations that they make. A substantial number feel that making FLES mandatory for everyone is not a desirable practice. Not only do they ask for the opportunity for each child to choose whether or not he will study a foreign language, but they urge a choice of languages, a new variety of languages, and the possibility of learning more than one language. Audio-visual aids are considered by former FLES pupils to be an important part of the FLES program, but not to the exclusion of direct interchange between the teacher and the pupils.

Some of the above proposals, such as offering to students a choice of a variety of language offerings, would make substantial demands upon the elementary-school budget, to say nothing of the administrative and teacher-shortage problems which need to be considered. Even allowing the child a choice as to whether or not he will study a foreign language poses scheduling problems which most elementary-school administrators would rather avoid. Moreover, how many children would study math, science, English, history, geography, or any other subject if they had the choice? And how can a child develop an interest in something he has never been exposed to? Perhaps most important, how can we, even as educated adults and foreign-language teachers, know which of these children will have a use and a need for knowledge of a foreign language in their future? If we do not know the answer to this question, how can they know? Some of the students ask for some kind of homogeneous grouping, and many foreign-language teachers would readily agree that this would solve many of their problems. In the two schools in this report in which the language offering was confined to gifted children, morale and progress did seem significantly better than in the programs for unselected groups of children. Yet not all educators, and many of them in the administrative positions of our school systems, are of the opinion that homogeneous grouping is an educationally sound practice. Whether it is or is not, this is not the point of debate here. Rather, since the practice in most schools at present is heterogeneous grouping, we need to be concerned with finding more effective ways of working with and teaching foreign languages to children with different abilities within the same four walls. Some of the students who responded to this questionnaire are still very young, barely the junior high school. Whether they will support their own proposals as taxpayers of the future remains to be seen; but their interest and attitudes are promising and encouraging.

Reports from high-school teachers and administrators appear

to confirm former FLES pupils' own statements about their skills and attitudes. Accurate pronunciation and speech patterns, an intuitive sense for the grouping and choice of words, a wider active and passive vocabulary are among the frequently mentioned capabilities and accomplishments of FLES-trained students. High-school teachers and administrators observe a marked difference in classroom atmosphere of classes with FLES experience and those without it. Classes composed of high-school beginners plod along with minimal student participation in contrast to classes of FLES-trained pupils which are lighted by animation and an eagerness to participate. Moreover, the FLES-trained classes include a wider range of students, many of whom would not ordinarily have studied a foreign language in high school. The non-FLES high-school classes, by contrast, are composed solely of those students who are college-bound.

More often than not, high-school enrollments in the foreign language have increased at a steady rate each year since FLES-trained pupils began reaching the secondary schools. Dr. George B. McClellan, Superintendent of the Hackensack, New Jersey Public Schools, has estimated that, as a probable result of the Hackensack Public Schools' FLES program, there is a 7% higher enrollment at the junior-senior levels of Hackensack than in other school districts where foreign languages are begun in the seventh and eighth grades. Dr. McClellan cites examples of Hackensack children who have been selected to serve as bilingual guides at the World's Fair, to receive foreign study scholarships, and to fill other positions requiring bilingual proficiency.

A tendency of FLES-trained pupils to stay with foreign-language study through the upper levels of high school is noted by many high-school teachers and administrators. In school systems with FLES in the elementary schools, the eleventh- and twelfth-grade classes appear to be composed entirely of the FLES-trained pupils.

A few high-school teachers and principals have found that FLES has had the opposite effect upon high-school enrollments. Dislike for, or boredom with the foreign-language class in the elementary schools has led students to drop it at the first opportunity. The high-school teachers complain that their FLES-trained students are immature and want all instruction treated as a series of games. They resist instruction in reading and writing. Little or no homework in the grades has resulted in feelings of resentment toward foreign-language homework in the high school. If the limits of effectiveness of a good FLES program are still unknown, the effects of a poor one leave no doubt.

In the reports of school personnel we find, perhaps, the ultimate in extremes, with a fair scattering in between, of successful and unsuccessful FLES programs being offered across the country. The contrast is striking. As with most other things, the success of a FLES program is commensurate with the amount of thought given to planning, time given to organizing, and effort to finding and preparing competent personnel. We are fully justified in expecting that any school system which undertakes to initiate a FLES program will give the necessary time and thought for planning and organizing before leaping enthusiastically into the dark abyss with a hope of sprouting wings along the way down. Obviously, however, the matter of finding and training talented and competent foreign-language teachers is not the responsibility of the school system alone. Nor is the job done wholly by the teacher-training institutions. Our professional organizations, as well as every experienced teacher of a foreign language, have a vital contribution to make in guiding and encouraging new and aspiring members of the profession. The extent to which the burden of success of the FLES class rests upon the teacher has been neatly summed up by one unidentified teacher:

"The high-school students' memories of their FLES experience always center around class activities, directed by the classroom teacher. If the classroom teacher was not proficient in the language, little learning resulted."

FLES teachers, indeed any teachers, need to be creative people; but creativity requires an expenditure of energy. It is the school system which must make the effort to offer attractive and reasonable teaching loads and schedules to these creative teachers when we have trained them. Their energy must not be fully exhausted by day after day of ceaseless running from one class or one school to another. Energy must be conserved for creative teaching.

Former FLES pupils have turned up in probably every Ivy League college as well as hundreds of small colleges across the country. At present, however, it is not possible to measure fully the performance of FLES graduates in college against students without a FLES background. Colleges have generally kept no kind of record concerning the pre-high-school preparation of their students. Information about the performance of former FLES pupils in college foreign-language classes has come mainly through feedback to the high schools. Students who have maintained a contact with their high schools have reported receiving advanced placement, extra credit and language exemptions in college.

Of seventy-nine colleges contacted, three were able to offer information about former FLES pupils on a number of skills and attitudes. All three professors rated the students "above average" in aural comprehension. In speaking fluency, one professor gave a rating of "above average," the other two "average." Reading facility drew two "average" responses and one "below average" response. The professor who rated former FLES students "below average" in reading facility and in pronunciation and intonation patterns, rated them "poor" in vocabulary and in writing ability, while the other two professors rated students "average" in both of these areas. In cultural understanding and attitude toward the foreign culture, these same two professors concurred in their ratings of "above average," the third professor granted "above average" for attitude only and "average" for understanding. This professor and one of the other two rated the students "average" in attitude toward foreign-language study and the other rating in this area was "above average." A chart showing these ratings is as follows.

Each of the three professors is identified by A, B, or C in the chart.

	superior	above average	average	below average	poor
aural comprehension skill		A, B, C			
speaking fluency		C	A, B		
accurate pronunciation and intonation patterns	B	C		A	
reading facility			B, C	A	
vocabulary			B, C		A
writing ability			B, C		A
cultural understanding		B, C	A		
attitude toward the foreign culture		A, B, C			
attitude toward foreign-language study		C	A, B		

Professors A and C find that the quality of work done by former FLES pupils is, as a rule, different from the kind of work done by students who began their study of a foreign language in high school or college, while Professor B finds no significant difference. Professor A states: "They are definitely better oriented toward the aural-oral." Professor C's comment is similar: "Their oral work is superior to their written work." All three professors indicate that, so far as they know, most of these students are still studying the language they began in elementary school. Professors B and C say that they have also, in some cases, studied additional languages.

The question "Are you pleased with the performance of the former FLES students?" brought forth the following answers:

Professor A

"In general, yes. There should be more emphasis on traditional grammar skills and on acquisition of a wider vocabulary."

Professor B

"Pleased, yes. Satisfied, no! Somehow, the teaching is less effective than it should be. There is much talk of the 'target' language. Somehow, much teaching is missing the target. FLES students have learned expressions, songs, and games, but they have not developed the ability to use the foreign language to communicate ideas, nor do they realize that such communication should be their goal. We still have a long way to go in improving methods of teaching foreign language."

Professor C

"In general, yes. There are shortcomings in the ability to write correctly and coherently. There should be a better balance between speaking and hearing and the practice in writing and research."

Statements of these college professors seem to agree with feelings and criticisms about FLES expressed by the FLES pupils themselves. We must be reminded, however, that not all of the feelings and criticisms are negative ones. If this report appears to dwell more frequently on the darker aspects of the present picture, it is only because of our interest and desire to color more rosy the picture of the future. Satisfaction with the past has never led to improvement. Good FLES programs, where they exist, and many of them do exist, have drawn the support and approbation of everyone directly and indirectly concerned. Many of the FLES

programs in our schools are of recent vintage and are in need of help. If they can be shown how and where to get that help and if they are willing to make necessary effort, there can be many more FLES programs throughout the country such as the one described by Professor B:

"Twenty years ago in suburban Cleveland, it frequently happened that French books were closed when eighth-grade French classes ended at three o'clock. Ten minutes later, a discussion of the history lesson would be conducted in French. Pronunciation was imperfect, but French was used with purpose and skill. Now if we can really put the best of the old and the best of the new together, foreign-language teaching in the U. S. A. can lift its head proudly!"

VIRGINIA SPAAR
Columbia University

73/74

V. EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION

SCOPE AND IMPLICATIONS ASSESSMENTS

The relative position of media in the total process of instruction has been and is a controversial subject. Although the two essays in this section address themselves specifically to television, they have implication for audio-visual media in general.

The first essay emphasizes the scope of educational television as an instructional tool in FLES and comments on student receptivity to televised programs.

The second essay considers the relative merits and limitations of educational television, as documented by more rigorous studies of the medium as it affects foreign-language classes.

ROGER A. PILLET
The University of Chicago

SCOPE AND IMPLICATIONS

In 1959-60, just over 100,000 FLES pupils were receiving televised instruction in French. Today, reportedly, more than two million children are taught French through this medium.

Of the ten or twelve televised FLES programs in French produced within the past eight years, only two continue to present their telecasts to a great number of schools all over the country. These are the Midwest Program on Airborne Television Instruction (MPATI), broadcasting from aircraft circling over Indiana, and *Parlons Français* produced by the Modern Language Project of Boston, Massachusetts.

MPATI's materials reach some 1700 member schools within a six-state region. It was estimated that in September 1966, two FLES courses in French for grades 4-6 were seen by slightly more than 11,000 children.

At the close of the 1966-67 school year, T.V. stations in more than twenty-five states and a few communities in Canada were telecasting for grades 4-6 from one to three levels of *Parlons Français* to approximately two million children. In addition, most of these stations also telecast lessons for the teachers.

The successful FLES programs using televised lessons do much more than merely supply sets for the classrooms and require the teachers to turn them on at the appropriate time and off when the lesson is finished. These programs include some, if not all, of the following requirements that contribute to their success: (1) there is an enthusiastic and cooperative administrative team from the school board, superintendent, supervisors, principals right down to the classroom teachers; (2) a foreign-language coordinator supervises the over-all program; (3) specialists do the teaching or conduct pre-service and/or in-service workshops to prepare classroom teachers in the language, or native speakers in methods of teaching; (4) there are daily lessons of fifteen to twenty minutes duration including, on the average, two telecasts, and three follow-up periods (some time is devoted also to lead-up activities prior to viewing the telecast); (5) use of, and correct implementation of, components accompanying the course, such as teacher manuals, student records, student workbooks and tests (some school systems have even supplied records to parents); (6) a periodic evaluation is held to determine strengths and weaknesses of the program;

(7) involvement of junior-high and high-school French teachers to ensure articulation between levels of study.

Student reaction to the television lessons is highly favorable, especially during the first year. There is no doubt that the medium is able to maintain interest at peak level. The use of authentic, professional, elaborate stage sets and props contributes in conveying meaning accurately. The presentation of cultural elements as inseparable from the language experience is characteristic of good T.V. programs. This aspect is developed in the following paper.

Not only does the television program provide an incomparable visual experience, but it is animated. The student's attention is more readily caught. He feels more involved, as though he were actually there. Through the ingenious questioning of the T.V. teacher, he feels that he is being talked to directly: "Can she really hear us?" "How can she tell we didn't repeat that loud enough?" "Who told her we didn't say that right?"

The display of simple props in the program (paper bag puppets, paper or felt cut-outs, clocks, flags, calendars, etc.) has motivated the students to produce their own for use in the classroom follow-up lessons. A popular, successful and extremely valuable device for re-enactment of the T.V. lesson in the classroom has been the "take-off" of the television teacher. In their eagerness to play the role of the teacher, the students have been known to appear wearing earrings and their hair in the style of the teacher's. Many well-received P.T.A. and school assembly programs have been presented, modeled on the students' own television lessons.

Among the comments in letters from students receiving their French instruction via television are their fondness for songs and games, the appearances of children their own age, and the use of live animals. "Is it true that French dogs bark in French?" "Is that what a French rooster sounds like?" Many of these young writers inform us of their attempts at teaching French to other members of the family and of their hopes of going to France someday to visit a particular spot, scene, river, monument seen in a certain television lesson.

It has been emphasized that an advantage of the television screen is its capacity to provide close-ups of the teacher's mouth to illustrate formation of sounds. Combined with keen hearing, this aid facilitates reproduction of the sounds by the students. In fact, it has been reported that after classes have sufficiently practiced utterances through this technique, the faulty pronunciation of a classroom teacher will not affect the students' correct pronunciation and speech habits.

In spite of the natural fascination that foreign-language learning via television holds for the student, the success of any program depends in great measure on the degree of staff enthusiasm and administrative support.

JACQUELINE GADOURY
New Paltz, New York

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Modern Language Project, Boston, Massachusetts.
Midwest Program on Airborne Television Instruction, Memorial Center, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana.
National Compendium of Televised Education, September, 1966.

ASSESSMENTS

While those of us who are engaged in FLES are assured that foreign languages can and should be taught in the elementary schools, few, if any of us, feel that the battle has been won. It is true that many FLES programs have been established in the past fifteen years. Wesley Childers tells us that the total FLES enrollment, which in 1953 was 145,643 mushroomed to 1,227,006 by 1959—an increase of 742.5%. While many of these programs have flourished and become integral parts of the long foreign-language sequence, many others have failed to produce the sort of achievement which could be expected. Jacob Ornstein in a recent article appraising FLES has said:

The sad fact is . . . that the poor quality of so much of FLES instruction is causing many of us to feel that the movement is by now in a hopeless muddle. "We've got a tiger by the tail," one superintendent remarked in New Jersey, "and I'm just worried over where it is all heading."

"Let it fall flat on its face," a Minnesota school administrator declared, "and then we'll go back to starting languages in high school where they belong." The *New York Times* education writer, Robert Terte, while noting the "unprecedented popularity" of FLES since World War II, points out that "specialists warn that the feast may turn to famine again unless the schools make sure they can deliver what they promise before embarking on a language program."¹

One of the major difficulties facing FLES is the lack of adequately trained teachers. Several new teacher-training programs have been established. NDEA Institutes have also provided help. However, the demand outstrips the supply. We have all too few teachers who would fit the description of the ideal teacher of FLES given by the MLA:

Ideally he should be an expert in the foreign languages he teaches, with near native accent and fluency, and also skillful in teaching young children.²

Many school systems have attempted to solve the problem by turning to television. One master teacher could be used to reach

¹ Jacob Ornstein, "A Frank Appraisal of the Foreign Language Program in Our Grade Schools," *Woman's Day Magazine* (January, 1966), p. 86.

² "MLA Second Statement of Policy," *PMLA*, Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, May 1961.

many pupils. Of all the aspects of FLES, this area has been the most thoroughly researched. One of the best known studies is that of *Parlons Français*, done by Garry and Mauriello. Due to the lack of trained FLES teachers, there was great interest in using a master teacher on T.V., with follow-up by the classroom teacher. In 1959, *Parlons Français* started a three-year integrated French course for elementary classes by means of T.V. and films. Two fifteen-minute lessons were broadcast each week and fifteen-minute follow-up periods to be directed by the classroom teacher were recommended. Since the first year of research had shown that classroom follow-up was an important element in language achievement, this study was designed to find out how these follow-up activities could be made most effective.

Forty-five fifth-grade teachers, whose classes were to receive *Parlons Français*, were divided by testing into two equal-sized groups—"fluent" and "non-fluent." These teachers were then randomly assigned to two groups. Half of the teachers viewed weekly programs which were designed to go over lesson content and to demonstrate classroom procedures. The other half of the teachers were asked to work with tapes which had been prepared to improve pronunciation and to increase knowledge of structure through drills. Each group was instructed to spend $\frac{1}{2}$ hour per week with these training aids.

Two variations of practice were also included in the design. The first was a series of tapes to be used in the classroom by the children. In the other groups, the teacher was given a guide but conducted all follow-up activities herself. In both groups, the amount of practice was the same—30 to 40 minutes per week in addition to the T.V. program.

This gave the four following arrangements.

1. Teacher tape-recordings plus teacher-directed practice.
2. Teacher tape-recordings plus pupil tape-recordings.
3. Teacher T.V. program plus teacher-directed practice.
4. Teacher T.V. program plus pupil tape-recordings.

Four aspects of the spoken language were measured—pronunciation, fluency, spontaneity, and comprehension. The first three were combined into an individual test and the fourth was developed as a group test. Some 1300 fifth-graders were given the group test. A 25% random sample was given individual tests. The children were tested at the end of the second year of instruction. Each class was viewed as a single case, with the score for the class being the mean score on a given test.

The most important findings of this study are:

1. Within a single year, teachers ranging from moderately fluent to non-fluent obtained roughly equivalent results.
2. Over a two-year period, statistically significant differences were observed in favor of the moderately fluent teacher.
3. Tape-recordings may be used for practice and may be preferable when teacher is either non-fluent or moderately fluent. However, the difference is not significant.
4. Though first year's research showed teacher-directed follow-up superior, now the specially prepared tapes seem preferable because there was no significant difference.
5. Practice provided for the teacher—either by T.V. or by tape—makes no significant difference in the fluency of children.

The authors conclude that such an instructional program as *Parlons Français* will succeed or fail depending on the "energy, enthusiasm, and instructional skill with which the follow-up is carried on in the classroom." * They feel that the FLES specialist can best be used for supervision, demonstration, and training.

Another experiment with television for FLES instruction was done by Johnson, Flores, Ellison and Riestra. They hypothesized that children can learn a foreign language effectively if they are guided through a specially prepared audio-visual course by regular teachers who have little or no command of the language.

The first phase of the study began in the spring of 1959. One class in a Champaign, Illinois, elementary school was given Spanish five days a week for twenty-five minutes each day. At the end of the year, they found that the Spanish group showed gains equal to or greater than a control class who had no Spanish when achievement in reading, writing, and arithmetic was measured.

Phase II began in October of 1959. The objectives of this phase were to develop effective procedures and materials using T.V. and tapes when the teacher was unfamiliar with the foreign language, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these materials.

One hundred twenty-five pupils in five fourth-grade classes were used. The experimental group was taught by T.V.—tape lessons guided by teachers who had little or no command of Spanish. The contrast group was taught by specialist teachers who had native or near-native fluency in Spanish. There were two classes in each group. The fifth class was composed of students who had had

* Ralph Garry and Edna Mauriello, *Summary of Research on "Parlons Français,"* p. 33.

Spanish during Phase I and was used as a laboratory group for the preparation of material.

In both groups, the audio-lingual skills were taught. All classes met twenty minutes, five days a week. The basic content of both courses was the same, but the contrast teachers were free to go as quickly as they wished and to devise their own teaching techniques. The experimental group had a T.V. lesson once a week. Follow-up was provided by taped drills. All these drills were presented in such a way that the teacher could conduct them without having to teach the sounds of the language.

The first evaluation was done at the end of fourteen weeks. In tests of listening comprehension, there was little difference between the two groups. The slight difference favored the experimental group. In pronunciation, the scores of the T.V.-tape group were 96% of those made by the contrast group. In speaking, the experimental group achieved scores which were 82% of those of the contrast group when tested for appropriateness of response. In the second section of the speaking test, which was to evaluate the immediacy of the response, the experimental group's scores were only 69% of those of the contrast group's.⁴

The students were tested at the end of the year. The investigators found:

1. The group taught by T.V.-tape achieved a composite score of 92.05% of that of the group taught by specialist teacher.
2. There was no significant difference between any two sets of means.

They conclude that by using T.V. and tapes, the nonspecialist teacher can do nearly as well as the specialist teacher in the skill areas tested. However, they also point out:

There are, of course, intangible factors in the relationship between the class and the live specialist, highly qualified as a foreign-language teacher, that defy testing and resist duplication in the less personal relationship between teacher and pupil, in the experimental system. For this reason we would maintain that there is no substitute for the well-qualified teacher. . . .⁵

⁴ The viability of teaching French principally through a non-specialist supported by media other than television has been evaluated at the University of Chicago. See Roger Pillet "French with Slides and Tapes," *The Elementary School Journal*, LXII (May, 1962), and a follow-up study "French with Slides and Tapes—A Re-appraisal," *The Elementary School Journal*, LXV (November, 1964).

⁵ Joseph Flores, Charles E. Johnson and Fred P. Ellison, "The University of Illinois Experiment in FLES," *Hispania*, Sept., 1961, pp. 511-513.

The study done by Maier and Jacobs is an interesting one, for they hoped to find out not only how well children achieved when learning foreign language by T.V. but also to discover what effect T.V. instruction had on both pupil and teacher attitudes. The Denver Colorado Schools were used. A T.V. course in Spanish was given to 5th- and 6th-graders. The 6th-graders had a 15-minute T.V. lesson in Spanish listening and speaking on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Wednesdays, these same classes were given instruction in reading and writing for 30 minutes via T.V. There were three groups of classes. The program-taught group was given programmed instruction. The teacher merely acted as a proctor. The teacher-taught group was taught by trained Spanish teachers using conventional techniques. The third group was taught by trained Spanish teachers plus the program.

Questionnaires to measure the attitudes of both teachers and pupils toward Spanish were developed in order to determine the effects of the instructional techniques on educational outcomes. The three groups were compared on the outcomes of Spanish post-test achievement, post-attitude toward Spanish, and standard deviation of the achievement test. Then, in order to find out about the kinds of classes which profit from each instructional technique, the intercorrelations of both student scores and teacher attitudes were examined.

The investigators found that the program is an effective means of instruction, especially if it is combined with a trained teacher. They also found that the trained teachers who used the program and liked Spanish wanted to use programmed instruction. The trained teachers who didn't use the program and liked Spanish wanted to use regular instruction. The teacher-plus-program-group students who had good aptitude and achievement also had an interest in independent study. Therefore, they suggest that, in order to develop interest in the foreign language among high-ability students, one should use the program and a trained teacher.

Moskowitz was also concerned with attitudes. She points out, with great justification. "Those doing research in FLES are prone to solicit opinions from administrators, educators, and T.V. teachers concerning the effectiveness of T.V. teaching. Frequently, we overlook an important source of data: *the children*." The purpose of her study was to examine the reactions of elementary-school children toward foreign language and to see if different learning conditions influence children's feelings toward foreign language.

Children from two elementary schools near Philadelphia were used. Six classes, three fifth-grades and three sixth-grades, received

French instruction by T.V. Experimental group I also received twelve weekly Spanish lessons taught by a specialist in conjunction with their study of Latin America. A third group consisting of fifth- and sixth-grade classes who had no foreign language, was the control group.

Moskowitz had three hypotheses: classes who are taught one foreign language by T.V. and one foreign language by a specialist will have more positive attitudes toward foreign languages than those who do not. Secondly, they will also have more positive attitudes than those who receive instruction in one language by T.V. Finally, that children who receive foreign-language instruction have more positive attitudes toward foreign languages than those who do not.

Questionnaires were devised and were filled out anonymously by the children. The findings were surprising and arresting. The two-language group had more positive attitudes toward foreign language than the T.V. group or the no-language group. However, the no-language group had more positive attitudes toward foreign language than those who had had T.V. instruction.

A follow-up study was conducted in 1961 and 1962. A new T.V. group was added. A second group was made up of the T.V. group of the year before. Spanish lessons by a specialist were added to their program and they became the new two-language group. A third group was composed of fifth-graders who had studied French for five years under a specialist. They were called the special language group, since they were all selected pupils.

When the rankings of the means scores were examined, it was found that:

1. The more exposure to live lessons, the more favorable were the attitudes.
2. The no-language group had more favorable attitudes than both the T.V. group and the two-language group which had had two years of T.V.
3. The least favorable attitudes of all were those of the same group—the T.V. group of 1961. Their attitudes improved so slightly in 1962 that they still ranked below all other groups.

Moskowitz recommends strongly that if T.V. instruction in FLES is used, that it is important to continually check on attitudes which are being developed and to modify the program accordingly.

It can be seen that research thus far has been directed to discovering whether instruction by television can be as successful as instruction by the specialist teacher. The problem of how television

can best be used has not as yet received sufficient attention. This is an area worthy of much careful research.

For example, there is much concern with the teaching of deep culture—a difficult job at any level, especially so at the FLES level where language skills are quite limited. Corder suggests:

To achieve a better use of T.V. we must exploit what T.V. can do best, that is, use it *contextually*; by this I mean show language behavior in natural situations. . . . If there is one thing that T.V. can do above all others, it is to present real life or a simulation of it. . . . Our starting point for a T.V. method therefore should be language presented in context. . . . We must start from situations selected with all the care and skill hitherto devoted to the selection of the linguistic items, and then show the language which grows out of them or, if you wish, belongs in them.*

How exciting it would be to be able to show our American pupils the French child at home, at school, and at play. Children would delight in discovering how a French school is run, the relationship of the French child to his family, and the ritual of the dinner. Television can give us these opportunities and many more.

Some have said that we have expected too much from television. It is suggested that the right things have not been expected. Television cannot provide the human contact nor the immediate correction necessary to develop proficiency in speaking. This is rightly the province of the teacher. However, television can do many things that we have not yet demanded of it. It can do something that the teacher cannot do. It can bring the foreign culture to the child in a realistic and vivid fashion. Corder points the way to the future when he tells us:

T.V. can set formal teaching free from the constricting walls of the classroom. This fact alone will one day transform language teaching.[†]

VIRGINIA GARIBALDI
Lakewood, Ohio

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brooks, Nelson. *Language and Language Learning*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964.
- Carroll, J. B. "Foreign Languages for Children: What Research Says," *National Elementary Principal*, vol. 39, no. 6, 1960, pp. 12-15.

*S. Pit Corder, "Modern Foreign Language Teaching by Television," *Trends in Language Teaching* by Albert Valdman, p. 249.

[†]*Ibid.*, p. 228.

- "Foreign Languages in the Elementary School: a Second Statement of Policy," *Hispania*, vol. 44, no. 3, Sept., 1961.
- Garry, R. and Mauriello, E. "Summary of Research on *Parlous Français*," Boston, Massachusetts: Modern Language Project of the Massachusetts Council for Public Schools, 1960.
- Johnson, Charles, et al. *The Development and Evaluation of Methods and Materials to Facilitate Foreign Language Instruction in the Elementary Schools*. Urbana, Illinois, 1962.
- Maier, Milton H. and Jacobs, Paul I. "Programmed Learning—Some Recommendations and Results," *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, April, 1964, pp. 242-55.
- Moskowitz, Gertrude. "TV FLES vs. Live FLES: A Study of Student Reactions," *Modern Language Journal*, vol. XLVI, no. 5, May, 1965, pp. 213-19.
- Moskowitz, Gertrude. "TV Versus Classroom Instruction in Foreign Language: a Study of Elementary School Children's Attitudes," *The Journal of Experimental Education*, vol. 33, no. 2, Winter, 1964, pp. 175-81.
- Ornstein, Jacob. "A Frank Appraisal of the Foreign Language Program in Our Grade Schools," *Woman's Day Magazine*, Jan., 1966.
- Randall, Earle. "The Use of Television in Teaching FLES," *The DFL Bulletin*, vol. IV, no. 1, Feb., 1965.
- Valdman, Albert; editor. *Trends in Language Teaching*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966.

CONCLUSION

The FLES Committee of the AATF, in the Report for 1967, has attempted to concentrate most of its discussion on the pupil in a FLES program and on the results of early language learning in later years. It is the hope of the Committee that the areas researched in this report will prove to be of assistance to both the professionals and the non-professionals involved in, or contemplating, FLES programs.

Although history of FLES in the United States has been relatively short, the problems have been myriad, some of them solved, others still remaining to be resolved. The Report just completed should bring encouragement and persuasiveness for furthering the value and expansion of FLES programs. It is the hope of the Committee that those who read this Report will wish to react to certain controversial aspects or opinions and that a dialogue will be created among FLES advocates, secondary-school teachers, and college professors. Success in FLES on a pedagogical basis can only be realized by the sharing of problems and ideas. In turn, this exchange of information should result in constructive re-assessments of FLES training.

In terms of an early start of a foreign language, the concern of the Committee was to describe the effects from a pupil's point of view of continued study through the later years. The Committee recognized the need to instigate a study that would eventually lead to re-appraisals of current FLES practices. Reactions were sought from pupil experiences concerning teachers, procedures, materials, and ETV. The honest opinions related by students who were products of FLES programs should provide definite insights into more profitable instructional programs.

It was also the intention of the Committee to highlight certain areas that are critical relative to improvements quite necessary at present if FLES programs are to continue to play a major role in the total development of the elementary pupil. The needs in FLES programs, resulting in a profitable experience, are indeed well-defined in this Report: competent teachers, linguistically oriented materials, articulation of skills as well as content, and instruments of evaluation. The above are the "sine qua non(s)" of well

structured language programs. There are also implied needs that transcend this Report, such as, the retraining and re-orientation of secondary-school teachers as well as college teachers in procedures of language learning as related to early beginnings.

Finally, it is the hope of the Committee that sensitive areas discussed herein will be the subjects of future research resulting in more sophisticated programs. Indeed, the Committee would accept this as reward enough for a year's work.

EDWARD H. BOURQUE
Fairfield Public Schools

THE FLES COMMITTEE OF THE AATF

1967

Co-Chairmen

Roger A. Pillet
The Graduate School of Education
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Edward H. Bourque
Consultant, Foreign Languages
Fairfield Public Schools
Fairfield, Connecticut

Members of the Committee

Jermaine Arendt
Consultant, Foreign Languages
Minneapolis Public Schools
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Virginia Garibaldi (Miss)
1327 Bonnie View Ave.
Apt. 410
Lakewood, Ohio 44107

Homer Bass Dyess
Teacher of Foreign Languages
Orleans Parish Schools
New Orleans, Louisiana

Virginia Gramer (Miss)
FLES Coordinator
Hinsdale Public Schools
Hinsdale, Illinois

Carol Fisher (Miss)
FLES Coordinator
Dearborn Public Schools
Dearborn, Michigan

Robert Leon Kastner
Head of Department of
Foreign Languages
McDonough No. 35
Senior High School
New Orleans, Louisiana

Jacqueline Gadoury (Miss)
Campus School
State University College
New Paltz, New York

Gladys C. Lipton (Mrs.)
Assistant Director
Bureau of Foreign Languages
for New York City
Board of Education of New York City
Brooklyn, New York

Marjorie L. Pei (Mrs.)
Assistant Director
Elementary Education Program
Washington University
Saint Louis, Missouri

Elizabeth Ratté (Miss)
Department of Foreign Languages
Boston University
236 Bay State Road
Boston, Massachusetts

Virginia L. Spaar (Dr.)
Assistant Professor of French
Foreign Language Coordinator
for Supervised Teaching
Teachers College
Columbia University
New York, N. Y.

Past Chairmen

Mary Ann Brown (Miss)
Loop Junior College
Chicago, Illinois

Virginia Gramer (Miss)
FLES Coordinator
Hinsdale Public Schools
Hinsdale, Illinois

Marjorie L. Pei (Mrs.)
Assistant Director
Elementary Education Program
Graduate School of Education
Washington University
St. Louis, Missouri

Elizabeth Ratté (Miss)
Department of Foreign Languages
Boston University
236 Bay State Road
Boston, Massachusetts

Lee Sparkman (Mrs.)
Department of Linguistics
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

Sidney Teitelbaum
Supervisor of Foreign Languages
East Meadow Public Schools
East Meadow, New York

Margaret Lee Wood (Mrs.)
Director, Foreign Languages
Encyclopedia Britannica
Educational Corporation
Chicago, Illinois